



CECILIA'S FORETHOUGHT.

THE  
HAPPY HOLIDAYS;

OR,

BROTHERS AND SISTERS AT HOME.

BY  
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'OUR BIRTHDAYS,' 'LIVE TOYS,' 'PICKLE FLORA,' ETC.

WITH FRONTISPIECE BY F. GILBERT.

LONDON:  
GRIFFITH AND FARRAN,  
(SUCCESSORS TO NEWBERRY AND HARRIS),  
CORNER OF ST PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.  
MDCCCLXV.



**MURRAY AND GIBB, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.**

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# THE HAPPY HOLIDAYS.

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## CHAPTER I.

Strange Proceedings of Penelope—Her Reasons—Arrival of Julian and Paul—Mutual Distrust—Cousin Kate's kind Efforts.

'My dear Pen,' said Kate Percy to her little cousin, 'do explain to me your last half-hour's proceedings. I have been so much amused, and so much puzzled, that I have actually done nothing but watch you. Are you going to dismantle the room entirely?' Penelope was a quick and active-looking little girl of eleven; and she sprang down from a chair on which she had mounted, in order to reach the upper shelf of a large bookcase, as her cousin spoke.

'Dear me, Kate,' she cried, 'have you been watching me? I thought you were quite absorbed in your book, and would not notice me at all.'

'Do you not recollect that Cecilia always says I can look about me with one eye, and read with the other? And as I am here partly to play the part

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of a sort of mama to you and Cecilia during my aunt's absence, I feel bound to penetrate to the origin and motive of all your singular doings. Come, confess to me at once. First of all, why did you clear away your slate; your stand of lesson books, and your atlas from your own especial table, and hide them in that deep drawer below the bookshelves ?'

'Kate,' said Penelope gravely, 'don't you know what is to happen to-morrow ?'

'Indeed I know of nothing that obliges you to destroy all evidence of anything like school-work, which appears to me to have been your object to-day.'

'Well, I did wish to hide my lessons and writing altogether.'

'And your amusements too, apparently,' said Kate; 'your paint-box and little portfolio are stuffed—'

'Behind those great books,' said Penelope, clapping her hands; 'they are famously hidden.'

'And not only your own concerns, but Cecilia's. Where have you concealed her box and drawing-desk ?'

'In the chiffonier, which locks, luckily for her and for me. And our workboxes are quite at the top of the bookcase: you see that little carved edge comes in front of them, and no one would think of looking there; but I can reach them when we want them, by just climbing up the shelves.'

‘Then you consider your drawing and working materials to be securely hidden?’

‘Yes; then you see our shells and china jars, and such things, I have packed away in a little trunk, and I shall take it up into our bedroom.’

‘And what is become of your plants, geraniums, cinerarias, myrtles, etc.? are they all vanished for ever from our pretty room? No, it is not pretty now, it was pretty this morning; but you have actually taken down the pictures. Terribly bare and unoccupied you have made us look,—no flowers, no ornaments on the mantelpiece or the top of the chiffonier; no pictures, almost bare tables, and even pussy’s basket and cushion packed out of sight beneath the sofa! What does it mean?’

‘Cousin Kate, you have only been here with papa, Cecilia, and I; so you don’t understand what would happen to-morrow if I did not clear away all these things. Do you forget that the holidays begin to-morrow?’

‘Is it possible, Pen, that I have allowed such an event to escape my memory? Then our party will be enlivened to-morrow by the arrival of Julian and Paul. I must say, however, that this reflection does not explain your spoiling our once cheerful-looking little study.’

‘Our party to be enlivened indeed!’ repeated Pen. ‘I don’t know about that. Did you ever see Julian, cousin Kate?’



‘Yes, I will tell you what I remember of him and of Paul. How old are they now?’

‘Julian is fourteen, then Cecilia is thirteen, I am eleven, and Paul is ten.’

‘Then it is nearly ten years since your mama came to visit my mother, bringing with her, stout, mischievous, and pretty little Julian, who required a hundred eyes to prevent destruction of everything; quiet, delicate, and small Cecilia, who was at that time in great awe of her rough, bouncing brother; and you, a fat baby that could not walk. Paul was not then born. I myself, your wise cousin Kate, was then about your present age, and I remember being extremely amused at Master Julian’s pranks. Perhaps I shall still be so.’

‘Amused! I don’t know about that. Perhaps he won’t do the same with your things that he does with ours.’

‘It is then with reference to your brother’s arrival that you have made this great clearance.’

‘Of course it is,’ said Pen. ‘I don’t wish to have my themes and exercises carried about in Julian’s pocket, and read aloud to everybody, as they were last holidays; and I don’t wish my nice paints to be tumbled into the water-glass, and my brushes spoilt with paste and all sorts of things, and my drawings touched up, as Julian calls it, with pipes stuck into my dogs’ and horses’ mouths, and absurd hats put on their heads—’

‘Stop, dear Pen,’ cried Kate; ‘what a list

of grievances! Julian teases you. Is that the fact?'

'I don't know what you call teasing; but what he does is far beyond teasing, I think. However, he won't get my writings, or paints, or drawings this time. Then our workboxes—I don't like my nice clean reels to be strung together on a dirty string, and dragged about for the cat to catch, and my beautiful silver thimble glued on the end of his cane for a ferule.'

'Well, you have secured the workbox.'

'That I have!' said Pen, 'and the plants are much better sent back to the greenhouse than left here to be deluged with water one day and stripped of leaves the next, in order to try if they will sprout again. And Cecilia's nice pictures that papa had framed for her, he takes them out and what he calls improves them—that is, quite spoils them. So, Kate, I thought I would prevent his doing that sort of thing these holidays, by putting out of the way all my things and Cecilia's. Now do you understand?'

'Yes,' said Kate, 'I begin to comprehend. Then these holidays are by no means a season of pleasure and merriment to you?'

'Indeed they are not; quite the contrary. I am rather glad when the boys come home, but in a few days I make a calculation of how many more days they are to stay, and then I long for them to be away again. It is worse for poor Cecilia than for

me, because she has nicer things, and paints better, and has a guitar and some very handsome books; and Julian teases her and laughs at everything she does so constantly, that I am sure Cecilia is miserable till they go again.'

'And what about Paul? Does he, too, constitute himself a kind of bugbear to his sisters?'

'Paul is not so bad, but he likes to imitate Julian in everything: so, what Julian does to Cecilia, Paul does to me; and really he is excessively annoying sometimes. Cecilia is so gentle and so good-tempered that she never says anything cross to either of them, but I know she dreads their coming. Ask her now,' said Pen, as her sister entered the room.

'I hear that your brothers arrive to-morrow,' said Kate; 'is this a matter of rejoicing to you? I find there is not much delight felt by Pen in consequence of this expected arrival.' Cecilia was a tall slight girl, rather grave-looking when compared with her vivacious younger sister, but her countenance was expressive of much good temper and much sense; still she was evidently very timid and shy.

'Of course, Kate,' she replied, 'we must be glad to see our own brothers, and I mean to try to make the holiday time as pleasant as possible, for I know they will both miss mama very much. I am so glad you are here! I do not know how we could have done without you.'

'Yes, we shall quite look to you for protection,' said Pen. 'I mean always to take shelter behind

you, Kate. Oh, I can assure you that you have not come here for nothing ! You will find taking care of us in holiday time no— What is the word, Cecilia ?’

‘I suppose you mean “sinecure,”’ said Cecilia ; ‘but, Pen, you should not make Kate suppose that we shall want protection from our own brothers. I dare say Julian and Paul will be quieter this time than the last.’

‘I have been telling Kate just what Julian did when he was at home last, and recollect mama was here then ; so I expect he will be much worse now, for he does mind mama, and it is not likely he will much care for what cousin Kate says.’

‘Why do you think so ?’ asked Kate, smiling.

‘Oh, Julian despises all girls and women ! You need not look incredulous—I assure you he does, all but mama ; and he believes her quite perfection in everything, but he will consider you like all other young ladies, and will hold you in contempt !’

‘What a dreadful prospect, Pen !’ said Kate, laughing, ‘to be held in contempt by a schoolboy of fourteen.’

‘Oh, Pen !’ cried Cecilia, ‘you should not prejudice Kate against our brothers before she sees them. I dare say they are better now than last winter.’

‘Did your mother know, Cecilia, how Julian teased and annoyed you during the holidays ?’

‘She did know partly,’ replied Cecilia, ‘but you know she was beginning then to be very delicate

and weak, so that we were very little in the drawing-room: for, whenever we began to be noisy, papa sent us all out; and when I went back by myself, to avoid Julian's nonsense, mama did not like that I should leave my brothers, and I am afraid she thought I was sulky. But I assure you, Kate, I do love them both very much; perhaps you will help us to do better with them. I am too quiet, I am afraid, to be ever a good companion for Julian.'

'But I am not quiet,' interposed Penelope; 'yet we agree still less. I am afraid you will be quite shocked at us, Kate. I must confess that I am perpetually quarrelling with both of them; with Paul for myself, and with Julian for Cecilia!'

'That is a bad state of things, indeed, Pen; we must really hit upon some plan for living together in a pleasanter fashion.'

'Why, Pen,' cried Cecilia, 'what is become of all our things—our boxes, and china, and flowers, and everything?'

'I have put every single thing out of sight,' said Pen triumphantly; 'you know it is quite useless for either of us to think of painting, or working, or reading during the next six weeks, and you know how Julian treats all our favourite treasures: so when you want anything, ask me, and I will produce it.'

'Now, Pen,' observed Kate, 'listen to me; do sit down quietly for five minutes, and let us consider whether you have not made a mistake in

clearing away and hiding your things. Julian and Paul will certainly make this their chief sitting-room when they are in the house.'

'Oh yes! so it is,' said Cecilia; 'before they went to school it was for them as much as for us: they had half the bookcase, and half the cupboards, and shelves, and drawers, and of course it is so now in the holidays; for they may not make a litter in the drawing-room, and papa never likes any of us to go into his study, and nobody ever sits in the dining-room.'

'They could not be better off than here,' said Kate; 'I think this is one of the most cheerful and pretty rooms I know.'

The room in question, generally known as the schoolroom, had two bay-windows down to the ground, which overlooked a very gay little flower-garden; a long and high bookcase filled one end, and opposite the windows stood the piano, music-book stand, and chiffonier; at the other end was the fireplace and the door. Before the windows were the light flower-stands which Penelope had emptied that morning; and the writing-tables, sofas, and arm-chairs, that were variously placed about the room, gave it a pleasant look of industry and comfort. The walls had been ornamented with some of Cecilia's drawings, but now there was an unwonted bareness about the whole that was anything but inviting.

'Well, Kate,' asked Penelope, 'what mistake

have I made?—none certainly in putting all our goods out of harm's way!

'Yes,' replied Kate, 'that is just what I think is a mistake. When your brothers find that you quite expect them to destroy your property, and to annoy and tease you, they will think it incumbent on them to fulfil your expectations. And, seeing that you have endeavoured to hide things where they cannot find them, they will feel a boyish pleasure in hunting out your treasures. Do not you think so, Cecilia?'

'Yes,' said Cecilia, 'perhaps it would be better to leave everything as it was, in the hope that Julian is wiser than he was six months ago.'

'Indeed I think so,' continued Kate, 'and meet them with pleasure, and show no distrust or fear; that is the best way.'

'I can do that,' said Pen, 'for I really am glad when they first come, and I am not afraid of them either—they only make me very angry; but Cecilia does dread them both, and you will see how silent and shy she is when Julian is present. Unless you can have some power over Julian, I assure you we shall have no happy time during the next few weeks.'

'Then I shall certainly endeavour to gain the upper hand of Master Julian, for I don't wish to have any unhappiness whilst I am in charge. Has he always been a terror to you in this way, Cecilia?'

'No,' replied Cecilia, 'we used to do pretty well

together till he and Paul went to school; and they learnt there such a complete contempt for girls, that we have never been happy in the holidays, for Julian despises everything we do, and takes pleasure in worrying us. But I will not complain of him, poor fellow! Shall we not walk to-day, cousin Kate? And they set out for the usual ramble among the pretty country lanes and fields that surrounded their home.

The mother of these children had been extremely ill the previous year, and remained so weak and delicate, that it was advised that she should pass a year or two in the south of France. There had been a debate as to whether the two little girls should accompany her; and after due consideration it was decided that her sister, Mrs Percy, should go with her, leaving her daughter Kate to enact the part of mama, governess, and companion to her little cousins. Their father was to come and go, sometimes staying a few months with his wife, and then returning for a time to his estate and his children. This plan had been in practice for about three months, and Kate had quite gained the love and confidence of Cecilia and Pen, and she began to take great interest in their very different characters. There was, however, quite a new duty in view; and though she was a very sensible and clever girl, she felt rather diffident as to her powers of managing two riotous and mischievous boys. However, Mr Latimer was now at home, and she hoped



for some assistance and support from him, should Julian prove beyond her powers.

The next day she persuaded Pen to replace all the various articles which she had so carefully hidden; and long before the time of arrival, the schoolroom had resumed its usual appearance.

‘Then, cousin Kate,’ cried Pen, ‘it is decided that we are not to behave as if we thought our brothers the greatest plagues in the world, but as if we believed them to be the most kind and gentle of boys! Do you hear, Cecilia?’ Cecilia smiled.

‘Really,’ she said, ‘I am rather curious to see how they will do with Kate, and I rather expect that I shall escape a good deal, and that Julian’s tricks will be spent on her. I only hope, Kate, that they won’t frighten you away from us. We could not possibly do without you now.’

‘There is no fear of my being frightened away,’ replied Kate. ‘I undertook the care of you whilst my aunt is away, and I mean to keep to my agreement most fully. Now suppose we go and dress for dinner, so that you may be at liberty to do anything your brothers may require when they arrive, for they will only have a few minutes before dinner-time.’ This was accomplished, and the three were down stairs again just as a tremendous pull at the door-bell announced the arrival of the schoolboys, and almost at the same moment they dashed into the drawing-room.

‘What news of mama?’ exclaimed Julian, as he gave Cecilia a rough sort of kiss.

‘Oh, pretty good,’ she replied, ‘she was going on well. I did not see the last letter, but papa said he was satisfied. Do you not see cousin Kate?’ she continued; ‘will not you speak to her?’ Kate held out her hand.

‘I suppose,’ she said, ‘you are too big to be kissed, though I have often had you in my arms some ten years since. Probably you have no recollection of me?’

‘Not the slightest,’ said Julian; ‘where is papa?’

‘In the study,’ said Pen; ‘so you had better run and see him, and then get ready for dinner.’

‘Don’t, Paul,’ said she to her youngest brother, who was making great efforts to span her waist with his two hands; ‘papa is quite as particular as ever, so you had better go.’ And away they went.

‘Had you not better run up with them,’ said Kate, ‘and get what they want, for they have not much time?’

‘I dare not,’ said Cecilia; ‘they would say, “What do you come bothering us for?” and push me out perhaps.’

‘I will go,’ said Pen; ‘it is more than they deserve, but I mean to take your advice, cousin Kate.’ So she followed her brothers when they ran up stairs after a short greeting to their father.

‘Shall I unpack your things for you?’ she said, peeping into their room.

‘No ! get along,’ said Julian.

‘Yes ! do, Pen,’ cried Paul ; ‘I never can find what I want. Oh, what a bore it is having to dress for dinner ! Where is my hair-brush, Pen ? how slow you are !’

‘Come, Paul,’ remarked Julian, ‘you are not to have all the waiting upon. Why does not that lazy Cecilia come and get out my clothes for me ?’

‘She would very willingly have done so,’ said Pen, ‘but she thought you would not like her to come without being asked. There, now, I have found all your things, Paul ; so I will go.’

‘No, you won’t,’ said Julian, vexed at seeing Paul ready whilst he was rummaging vainly among the heap of odd things he had shaken out of his carpet-bag ; ‘come here directly, and look for my waistcoat, and tie my cravat, and make yourself useful for once in your life. There is the bell, come along !’ And they all three reached the dining-room just as their father, Kate, and Cecilia were going in.

‘It must feel very strange to you, boys,’ said their father, ‘to arrive at home without mama’s welcome.’

‘So it is, papa,’ replied Julian, ‘very strange and very disagreeable. I hope before next holidays she will be all right at home again.’

‘And meantime,’ said Kate, ‘I and Cecilia, and Pen, will do all possible things to make my aunt’s absence as little disagreeable as possible.’

‘I have done my best already,’ said Pen, laughing; ‘neither Paul nor Julian would have seen much soup or much fish to-day unless I had helped them both.’

‘By-the-bye, Miss Cecilia,’ Julian commenced, ‘how was it that Pen so politely came up-stairs to assist Paul in adorning himself, and you never came near me? I consider you showed a want of respect to your elder brother.’ Cecilia coloured, and said nothing.

‘I told you before,’ said Pen; ‘why do you ask again?’

‘Answer for yourself,’ retorted Julian. ‘Do you observe, Paul, that Cecilia scarcely ever speaks, and that Pen always replies for her?’

‘Now I think of it,’ said Mr Latimer, ‘there was during your last holidays a great deal of bickering and disputing; so much so, that your mother was often annoyed with it. So let me beg, this being your first day at home, that you will not bully and plague your sisters, and that you, Cecilia, will show no pettish temper.’ Poor Cecilia coloured up again.

‘Oh, papa,’ cried Pen, ‘she is never pettish.’ Julian clapped his hands.

‘There she goes again,’ he exclaimed. ‘Well done, Pen! are you the universal apologist?’

‘I don’t mean to apologize for you,’ replied Pen. ‘I don’t say that you never bully or plague.’

‘In whatever quarter the fault lies,’ remarked

Mr Latimer, 'pray let it be understood that we are to live in peace and harmony ; otherwise how shall we keep cousin Kate among us ?'

'I am sure,' said Kate, 'that we shall be very happy together, and that our weekly letter to my aunt will still contain nothing but pleasant news.' Then there was a long talk about the school progress of the two boys, and about the new-comers, and the old boys who had left; and after dinner Kate and Julian had a game at chess; and Paul absorbed himself in a book of wild sports, so that the evening passed without Cecilia's having endured any teasings at all. To Pen's extreme delight, Julian was thoroughly beaten, though he rather prided himself upon his chess-playing. She was especially pleased that Kate had shown her superiority in one instance; for she felt sure that had Julian been the conqueror, he would have said, 'Those silly weak girls, they can do nothing well.' Kate was pleased that the whole party had gone to bed in tolerable good humour with each other; but she was grieved to see how reserved and silent Cecilia had become. During the time she had been with her uncle and the two girls, she had found them both open and pleasant, and always ready to converse. Pen was by far the most lively and quick; but Cecilia was a thoughtful, sensible girl, of much acquirement for her years, and quite an equal companion for Kate. The latter had, however, discovered that she was easily discouraged and depressed, and very keenly

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alive to the slightest ridicule; and she now saw that the teasing, sneering habits of Julian had had the effect of making her dislike her brother, and that she seldom ventured to utter a word in his presence. Kate fell asleep in the midst of imagining plans for setting her cousins on a better plan together, and rose the next morning determined to do her utmost. Immediately after breakfast, Julian and Paul went out to look at the ponies, and the dogs, and so on; and Pen cast a longing glance after them, as if she would have been very glad to go too.

‘Why don’t you run after them, Pen?’ asked Kate.

‘I don’t exactly know,’ said Pen. ‘I had half a mind to go. I am as fond of the dogs and horses as they are.’

‘Then don’t wait to be asked,’ returned Kate; ‘but the next time take it for granted that they are glad to have you with them. And now, let us go to the schoolroom as usual.’

## CHAPTER II.

The Schoolroom—A Row on the Lake—Julian's Mishap—  
The Island—The damaged Summer-house—Proposal to  
repair and beautify it—The Labour divided.

THEY had just taken out their books, slates, etc., when the two boys very noisily came in. Cecilia cast a despairing look at Kate, who quietly went on setting Pen her exercise.

‘Now, Julian,’ she said, when Pen had retired with her slate and book to another table, ‘are you thinking of working a little at your books every morning? If so, we can arrange nicely for you here, whilst we are also at work; but if it is to be a complete holiday for you, I must beg you to leave us our two hours every day uninterrupted. How is it to be?’

‘Oh!’ said Julian, ‘we have a great long holiday task to do, and maps to draw. We must either work a little every day, or else we shall have a great hurry and hard work at last, to be all right for school again.’

‘Then I strongly advise you to do a little every morning; suppose you set to work now, whilst Cecilia reads to me.’ Julian stared, and Kate seated herself by Cecilia, and opened her book.

When Cecilia had read a few words, he came round and looked over her shoulder. “‘Lives of the Queens of England.’ Oh, what a stupid book! do you really make Cecilia read that by way of lesson?”

‘Yes, I do, Julian; and you must be silent, if you please, whilst she reads.’ So Julian went to Pen, and looked at what she was writing.

‘Oh, cousin Kate!’ he exclaimed, ‘do you teach Pen? She is putting all her genders wrong, and she has put small letters to the Christian names!’ Kate saw that nothing would be done that morning unless the boys were set to work themselves; so she said—

‘This will never do, Julian; don’t you see that you interrupt us, and are idling yourself? Now, will you do me a favour?’

‘Oh! you are going to ask us to go out of the room; but I like to stay here.’

‘And we like to have you here too,’ returned Kate; ‘but I propose that Cecilia and Pen shall leave their lessons to-day, and that we shall arrange a writing-table for you and Paul, and have all your books laid ready on it, and your paper, and pencils prepared for your maps: then to-morrow morning, when we come in here, you can at once commence what you have to do; and if I can give you any help as I sit here, pray apply to me.’

‘I don’t think you can help us,’ said Julian, with a toss of his head; ‘ladies know nothing of Greek or Latin.’



‘I wonder, though, if you could help me to mark the degrees of my map,’ said Paul ; ‘I do make such a mess of them.’

‘I think I will depute Cecilia or Pen to do that,’ said Kate. ‘They are both very handy at neat drawing of that kind.’

‘No indeed,’ cried Paul. ‘I can do it myself as well as they can. Girls draw maps, indeed!’

‘Bring me the map of Italy, Pen,’ said Kate, ‘that is just finished.’ And Pen, looking rather triumphant, produced a very clear and pretty map on a large sheet of cardboard.

‘Now I wish to show you, Paul,’ said Kate, ‘that girls can draw maps. If you are honest, you will allow that this is a nicely-drawn map, even without considering that Pen is still quite a child.’ Paul did not like to confess that he was surprised ; so he looked closely at the map, and said nothing.

‘Now, Julian,’ continued Kate, ‘let us have your opinion. Paul is evidently struck dumb with admiration.’ Julian looked at the map ; his cousin’s remark of ‘If you are honest’ had rather piqued him ; so he said—

‘It is so well done, cousin Kate, that I do think you or mama must have helped Miss Pen ; and another thing is, that those skeleton maps, as they call them, with the degrees all printed ready, look so much neater than they ever do drawn. And we are expected to do it all, degrees and everything.’ Pen gave a scream of delight, and clapped her hands.

‘All printed ready! Julian, oh! what a blind boy you are! Cecilia marked all the lines and degrees for me; and they must be well done if you thought it was print.’

‘Yes,’ said Kate, answering Julian’s incredulous look, ‘Cecilia did the degrees, or skeleton, and Pen did the map, quite without help. Your maps for school will doubtless be quite as nice; or Paul’s will be as nice, and yours, Julian, I expect, very much better. Have we any cardboard, Cecilia, for your brothers?’

‘Come, silent Ciss,’ cried Julian, shaking her by the shoulder, ‘do say something; you will have to lend us pencils and paints, for I don’t know whether we brought any.’

‘Here is some very thick, smooth, drawing-paper,’ said Cecilia. ‘Don’t you think, Kate, it will do as well as cardboard for the maps, and will be easier to carry, because it will roll up?’

‘Yes, I think that will do very nicely,’ said Kate. ‘Put it in the large drawer of that table, so that they can take it when they like.’

‘Then you had better lend us a paint-box altogether,’ said Julian; ‘where is yours, Cecilia?’

‘Here it is,’ she said; ‘but please take care of it and keep it clean, for it is nearly new.’

‘Nonsense,’ said Julian sharply; ‘do you think I cannot take care of it and keep it clean as well as you? There is nothing so wonderful in the box, is there?’

‘Only that mama gave it to me just before she went abroad, and I should like to have it in nice order when she returns.’

‘Then I don’t advise you to lend it to Julian,’ said Paul, ‘for he makes a dreadful mess of his own paint-box.’

‘Hold your tongue,’ retorted Julian; ‘all good artists have their things in confusion, and I mean to be a good artist.’

‘But not, I hope, to put your sister’s nice neat box in confusion. I will write for your own boxes, if they are left at school, and then there will be no spoiling of other people’s things; besides, Cecilia and Pen use their own every day.’

‘Do they?’ said Julian; ‘then I shall draw and paint every day, for I don’t mean to be beaten by sisters. If Paul and I draw every day, of course we shall be better painters than Cecilia and Pen.’

‘Why do you feel so sure on that point, Julian?’ asked Kate.

‘Because boys are always able to do things better than girls; and if girls sometimes do best, it is only because they have been more taught, or better taught.’

‘I quite allow,’ said Kate, ‘that boys can do some things better than girls, but not all things. Drawing, for instance, is often done quite as well. Here is an instance. You and Paul have had a drawing master at school, Cecilia and Pen have had no master; yet I scarcely think you will excel

them, although I have not yet seen your drawings.'

'I dare say they have worked at it much more than we have,' remarked Paul; 'and if they beat us in that, they don't in anything else.'

'That remains to be proved,' said Kate. 'Will you now fetch your books, so that we shall have no hindrance to-morrow morning?'

'Very well,' said Julian, 'I will have that table in the bow; it is nice and light there.'

'You might inquire first if any one else uses it,' remarked Kate; 'that is Cecilia's table.'

'Oh, she can use another,' cried Julian; 'I shall have that.'

'And I will have this,' said Paul, unceremoniously pushing off work-boxes and books from the table in the other bow.

'Gently, Paul,' said Kate. 'I cannot allow my affairs to be pushed away so quietly as Cecilia does. I must keep my table. You may take that one, or the little round one, not this.' Paul looked doubtful whether to insist or not; but his cousin looked so quietly determined to have her own way, that he left the disputed table and ran up-stairs for the books. These were not many in number, and were soon placed, with ink, paper, and pens, on each table.

'How comfortable we shall be,' cried Pen, 'all doing our lessons together!'

'You conceited little creature!' said Julian;

‘fancy talking of your lessons and our lessons together!—our classics, and your little bits of silly French!’

‘As our work here has ceased for to-day,’ said Kate, ‘I propose that you two boys shall give us a row on the lake until luncheon-time. Of course you are good rowers!’

‘I can row,’ said Julian. ‘I don’t think Paul can much; but I can pull the two oars easily, and he may steer.’

‘And as we go down the park,’ continued Kate, ‘you shall tell me why the French language is more silly than Latin.’

‘Yes, yes!’ exclaimed Paul, ‘a row in the boat! Come, Pen, don’t go up-stairs, and be an hour putting on your hat.’

‘We are ready now,’ said Kate; ‘our hats and capes are in the hall, so run before us and have the boat ready.’ Off went the boys; but they were followed so quickly by their sisters and Kate, that the boat was not yet pushed out of the boat-house, when they arrived on the bank of the lake. Paul, it must be owned, was not particularly handy, and Julian was almost on the point of asking one of the girls to come and help him; but having declared that he could manage it all by himself, he did not choose to acknowledge that a girl’s help would be of the slightest benefit. So Kate and the two sisters sate quietly on the grass, while Julian slowly got out the rather heavy boat, and

brought it round to the little pretence for a pier, which jutted out about three feet from the bank. Pen had cast many mischievous looks at her cousin, but had not ventured to say anything, and Kate persevered in her plan of taking for granted that all was right.

‘Now,’ cried Julian, ‘can you get in by yourselves? or must I come to help you?’

‘Thank you, Julian,’ replied Kate, ‘I believe we can manage to step into the boat; we often came down for a row when we were by ourselves, so were then compelled to do without help. There, you see we are already seated; this is quite luxurious, is it not, Cecilia, to sit here and be propelled along by Julian’s strong arm, without any trouble on our part?’

‘It is very pleasant indeed,’ said Cecilia; ‘but I think we make a very heavy load for one to pull. Cannot you row too, Paul?’ Paul was idly lounging in the stern, pretending to steer, and dipping his arms into the water, having tucked up his sleeves above the elbows.

‘I would rather stay here,’ said he. ‘Julian said he could row us all, so let him.’

‘You lazy fellow,’ said Pen, ‘I don’t believe you can row. Do go among the rushes, Julian; I want some long ones.’

‘But it makes it very difficult to pull, Miss Pen, with all these weeds hampering the boat. No; I shall go right across, and up the canal to the other

lake. Who rowed you, Kate, when, as you said, you came down alone ?'

'We rowed ourselves, of course,' said Kate. 'Pen can pull the oar as well as you can ; so can I ; and Cecilia is a far better steerer than our present.' Julian looked incredulous.

'He is not steering at all just now,' he said ; 'in fact, it does not need a steersman to go across this quiet lake. Cecilia steer indeed !'

'Then all the zigzags that we are making are quite intentional ; are they, Julian ? I thought you meant to go straight across. Well, we shall see how directly you will go into the opening at the canal.' The passage that they called the canal was a narrowing of the lake, which, after stretching nearly a quarter of a mile, widened again into a smaller lake, in the centre of which was an island. The small and rather sluggish stream, which ran through both lakes, found an exit at the opposite side to the canal, where it fell over a dam, surmounted by a strong iron railing or grating. This was partly to keep in the swans, and partly to prevent the boat going over when in the heedless hands of the children : for the fall outside the dam was of some depth ; and the stream, having again reached level ground, ran through a pretty wooded valley, and then an open meadow, before it bade adieu to the grounds of Mr Latimer. As the boat now approached the canal side of the lake, Julian looked behind him once or twice, and then pulled man-

fully, intending to shoot into the narrow passage as if it were the simplest thing in the world ; but either Paul silly gave the tiller a twitch at the critical moment, or Julian had miscalculated his distance, the result being that the boat went plump into the rushy and muddy bank at the corner of the canal. Kate could not forbear smiling, and Pen shouted with delight as she picked herself up from the bottom of the boat, where the jerk had thrown her on her face.

‘You stupid fellow,’ cried Julian, reddening, ‘why did you not steer better than that?’

‘You said just now you did not need a steersman,’ retorted Paul, ‘and I did not touch it ; it was your own bad rowing. What does it signify ? shove out again !’ But the bank was so soft, that Julian could find no firm spot to push against ; and as the girls neither scolded nor screamed, he had no one on whom to vent his vexation.

‘Will you allow me to advise you, Julian ?’ said Kate quietly ; ‘you are wearying yourself for nothing.’

‘Well, what do you say ?’ returned Julian sulkily.

‘You see that you are merely digging the oar into the soft bank. Come back to the stern of the boat ; then put an oar down on each side of the boat, and try if you cannot push against the bottom. You take one oar, and give me the other. Now push.’ This succeeded perfectly, and the boat shot out again far from the bank.



‘Now, Paul,’ said Kate, as Julian resumed his seat, ‘steer carefully into the canal. Come; show what you can do.’ Thus exhorted, Paul took his arms out of the water, sat straight, and steered, so that this time they glided nicely into the canal.

‘This boating is a horrid nuisance,’ remarked Julian. ‘I propose that we get out on the island. Do you know, Kate, we once had a sort of Robinson Crusoe place there; but I suppose the hut has tumbled down, and the garden gone to ruin. The girls were so stupid and useless, that we could not keep it up.’

‘Now, Julian!’ interposed Pen, ‘we kept it up very well until you went to school, and began to think us stupid and useless; it was during the last holidays that our settlement was spoilt. Let us renew it now; it would be a nice amusement.’

‘I will agree willingly to help in making your island settlement,’ said Kate; ‘it is a pretty spot, and might be made much more so. Let us look at it to-day. Julian, I think you have had enough rowing; let us take our turn.’ Julian was, in truth, in a dreadful state of fatigue and heat, but nothing would have induced him to confess as much before his cousin and sisters; so he gave up the oars with a careless air, and looked on with some expectation that cousin Kate would ‘catch a crab,’ and roll head over heels into the bottom of the boat. But she seated herself, and held the oar as if she had

been used to it all her life ; and to his still greater surprise, little Pen perched herself upon the other bench and pulled her oar straight and well, and they soon emerged from the narrow channel into the secluded little lake. It was surrounded with trees, so that scarcely a breath of wind disturbed the surface, and all along the banks the trees and bushes were plainly reflected in the water. The island in the middle of the lake had a thick group of trees at one end, and at the other a grass field dotted with a few thorns. A small landing-place had formerly been constructed, which was now partly sunk in the water, and overgrown with docks and nettles.

‘It is a very pretty spot,’ said Kate, ‘but very much neglected ; it will be a nice occupation for us to turn this island into a beautiful little garden. Let us look well over it first, and then we will sit down and consider what can be done.’ While she yet spoke, Julian was endeavouring to fasten the boat in some way to the shore ; the old post and ring had quite disappeared.

‘I’ll tell you how !’ exclaimed Pen ; ‘there are some very large stones up there ; they look like bits of an old wall : let us fetch one, and then tie the rope round it.’ Julian would not say that this was a good plan ; but Kate interposed—

‘Yes ; that is just the thing. Paul and Pen, run up for it.’ Between them they managed to push and roll the heavy stone close to the edge ; and the

boat being securely tied, the party commenced their tour of inspection.

‘How nice it would be,’ said Paul, ‘if we were now landing upon a real desert island,—if that boat were a wrecked vessel, of no use whatever!’

‘I would rather not be wrecked on a desert island,’ replied Julian, ‘with three girls to take care of. We should have enough to do to keep ourselves alive; they would be of no use.’

‘Come, Julian,’ said Pen, ‘you did not even know how to fasten your boat to the shore until I told you. Don’t be so conceited; we could do just as well without you on a desert island.’

‘Without disputing that point,’ interposed Kate, ‘let us hear what Paul would do first. Come, Paul, suppose we are wrecked, wet, hungry, and tired.’

‘Oh, the hungry part won’t do here; this island, you see, is too small for anything eatable to live on.’

‘Is that your idea too, Julian?’ asked Kate.

‘Why, yes; I don’t really see what we could eat here; there are no fruit-trees, not even a hazel on the island, and of course no beasts or birds.’

‘I’ve thought of something eatable,’ said Pen, ‘but I don’t know how we should catch it. The perch in the lake!’

‘Very well, Pen,’ said Kate, smiling; ‘you must confess, Julian, that Pen appears to have the most fertile imagination of any of the party. But

indeed this island is far too small to support five shipwrecked people. I think, however, we may practise contriving, and living here partly, with very little help from home; so that we should be better prepared for the real shipwreck, should it ever arrive. Here is our dilapidated abode!' There had been once a stone hut on the island, the roof of which had long since disappeared; but it had been replaced by one of poles and slates, which was only half tumbled down. There was nothing inside—not even a bench or a rude table; and even on this beautiful brilliant morning it looked desolate enough.

'Do you know, Kate,' said Cecilia, speaking almost for the first time since they had left the house, 'I remember this hut with a pretty pebble floor and a nice little round table, and some sort of chairs or benches, for mama used to sit here; and there were chickens or ducks kept on the island, which—'

'Chickens or ducks!' interrupted Julian; 'don't you know the difference between chickens and ducks? That is so like you!'

'I meant,' said Cecilia, 'that I did not remember which they were.'

'Well, Cecilia, go on,' said Kate, perceiving that she stopped short in her narration.

'Never mind now,' said Cecilia; 'I will tell you what I remember some other day.'

'No! I want to hear now how it used to be, be-

cause it would be very pleasant to renew whatever used to be here, before your mama comes back.'

'Oh yes!' said Pen; 'let us make it very pretty in all possible ways, and call it "Mama's Island."'

'Then let us have a council,' suggested Kate. 'What shall we do first?'

'Make the house weather-proof,' said Julian, with an air of authority.

'That I propose to leave entirely to you, Julian. What say you?'

'I will undertake to mend the roof, if you like.'

'And Paul shall make a door to open and shut,' said Kate, rather mischievously.

'Then, cousin Kate,' cried Paul, 'you must engage to give me the wood and the tools.'

'No, no, Paul; did I supply all you want for the work, I should take half the trouble off your hands. You must seek your implements for yourself. You have the door—that is settled. And now what are we helpless and useless girls to do? Julian, can you set us to something excessively easy and simple?'

'You are quizzing me, cousin Kate,' said Julian, a little angrily. 'I dare say you can do things; it is Cecilia and Pen whom I meant to call useless. Just try now. I have taken the roof, Paul the door; give Cecilia the little window, and Pen the floor, and you will see what an awkward botch they will make of it!'

'Botch! I suppose that is a schoolboy word for

failure and mistake. Do you agree, Cecilia, to try what you can do with the window?’

‘Yes,’ said Cecilia, ‘I think I can make it very pretty; but I hope, Julian, you will let me alone while I am working.’

‘That must indeed be a bargain,’ said Kate; ‘no one shall interfere with or advise their neighbours until all is done. But meanwhile I am left totally without occupation. What shall I do, Pen?’

‘There are the ugly rough walls, which would be better covered with something; but you see, Kate, there will be Paul at the door, myself on the floor, and Cecilia at the window; and really there will not be room enough for you to be working too inside.’

‘You are quite right, Pen, so I will take something outside. Suppose I clear a nice walk from the door to the landing-place, and make a border for flowers just round the wall of the hut?’

‘But you will keep near us, cousin Kate,’ said Cecilia; ‘I shall not get on at all unless you are here too.’

‘That’s not fair, Ciss; cousin Kate is not to help you. You are beginning already to back out of your engagement.’

‘I did not mean that I wanted Kate to help me in my work.’

‘What did you mean then?—do say, and don’t be so mysterious. What good is Kate to you if she does not help you?’ Cecilia looked at Kate, and said nothing.

‘Why don’t you speak, Ciss?’ said Julian, giving her a rough shake by the shoulder.

‘I’ll tell you, Julian,’ said Pen; ‘you don’t tease and worry us so much when Kate is by, so we are happier with her close to us.’ And having ventured these words, Pen dashed out of the hut, and Paul and Cecilia followed.

‘Silly little thing,’ said Julian, with a contemptuous curl of his lip.

‘I should rather say, “Silly boy,”’ remarked Kate, ‘that can find a pleasure in annoying his young sisters. Do you know, Julian, you deprive yourself of a very pleasant companion in Cecilia? Do you not observe how she withdraws from all discussion or conversation? And the difference is so manifest since you came, that really I miss her pleasant, cheerful voice very much.’

‘I don’t stop her from talking, cousin Kate; why do you suppose I do?’

‘You do not actually prevent her from speaking; but you snub her and ridicule her so much, or rather have done so before this visit, that she has not the heart or the courage when with you to be natural and easy. It will recoil upon yourself; you will quite lose all love from her.’

‘She is so stupid, cousin Kate, and says such silly things, that I cannot help catching her up.’

‘I do not at all agree that she is stupid, but perhaps time will show this better than argument. Shall we follow them, and see what they are doing?’

## CHAPTER III.

Pleasant Employment—Luncheon forgotten—Various Plans  
—A Ride proposed—The Cabinet—Evening Amusement.

GLAD to escape from anything like a lecture, Julian rushed out, and found the others discussing the best site for a kitchen-garden. Paul said the back of the house was the right place, because kitchen-gardens were never put forward; but Cecilia and Pen said the grassy part of the island that was open to the sun must be the place, because they might chance to be left a whole night upon the island, and then must depend on their own vegetables for breakfast.

‘So,’ said Pen, ‘we ought to plant some lettuces and radishes, and things that come up quickly, and then to have a supply of nets and fishing-rods, so that we could catch some fish.’

Cecilia looked shyly at Julian as he approached with Kate, saying, ‘We were supposing, Kate, that the boat might get loose, and then we could not leave the island until some one came to bring it back, and we might be half-starved before we were found.’

‘In order to provide for any such emergency,’



said Kate, 'we will have a small cupboard in the hut, where we will keep a bag of biscuits, some cocoa or coffee, and a cup or two. We will trust this cupboard to you, Cecilia; and then we shall not have wholly to rely upon Pen's fishing, and radishes, which are not yet planted. But by all means let us lay out the garden. I say with Pen and Cecilia, take the open and sunny part for use, and ornament as much as you like all about the hut with flowers and creepers. Let us mark out where the beds for vegetables must be.' The grassy end of the island sloped westward, facing the entrance of the canal, and was almost bare of shrubs or bushes, excepting on the south side, where was a sort of mass of tangled brushwood. 'There surely is a pigstye or some such thing amongst that tangle,' said Kate; and Julian and Paul rushed through the bushes to look.

'It is a little house for some animal,' shouted Paul; 'but it does not look like a pigstye.'

'It has something to do with the chickens or ducks that Cecilia remembers,' cried Julian; 'come and look!' So, at the expense of a few rents in the light summer frocks, a critical examination was made of the low tenement, which was unanimously pronounced to be a duck-house.

'Oh, we must have some ducks!' cried Pen; 'this is a splendid place for them, with all the water to swim in; don't you think so, Kate?'

'It is very good for ducks; but if we mean to

have a nice neat garden, they will be some hindrance to our keeping it so. However, we might try a few.'

'Then we shall have eggs to eat, or the ducks themselves, if we are very hungry,' said Paul; 'the idea makes me feel quite hungry now.' Kate laughed.

'I was wondering,' she said, 'whether any of you would find out that it is a long time since breakfast, and that we have entirely forgotten to go home for any luncheon.'

'Oh dear!' cried Paul, 'let us go back; I really am half-starved; I am dreadfully hungry.'

'Indeed,' said Cecilia, 'I did not once recollect that we meant to have gone home to luncheon; did you, Pen?'

'No, I never once thought of it; and you, naughty Kate, were amusing yourself by watching how long we could go on without being hungry.'

'Will papa be vexed that we did not go in?' asked Julian. 'We shall lay it all on you, cousin Kate.'

'What! am I to be answerable for all your misdeeds? But in this case I have no misgivings, for my uncle seldom comes in to luncheon; and if we happen not to be there, or to have left the room again, he takes a piece of bread and goes away directly: he does not care, in fact, whether we come in or not. So it is all right, and I am glad to find that we can endure so long without eating; we shall do famously for shipwrecked people.'

‘What o’clock is it, Kate?’ asked Julian; ‘we came out at half-past eleven; I remember hearing the stable clock strike twelve before I had the boat out of the boat-house.’

‘And since then,’ said Kate, ‘we have loitered away quite three hours.’

‘Then we shall not get back to the house,’ said Cecilia, ‘till about four, and that would be too late to eat luncheon; so there is no need to hurry back at all.’

‘We can do nothing here to-day,’ remarked Julian; ‘we had better decide what we want for to-morrow. I must have a mallet, and some slates and pegs, and a few strong nails, and some putty.’

‘And I,’ cried Paul, ‘must have some planks, and nails, and a lot of tools, and a handle and hinges—a whole carpenter’s shop, in fact.’

‘I,’ said Kate, ‘shall need merely a strong knife, a hoe, and a broom; so I shall be easily supplied. And for you, Cecilia, I am rather wondering how you intend to manage, for I believe you have taken the most awkward part of all.’

‘Come, Ciss,’ said Julian, ‘tell us how you mean to do your window.’

‘I mean to make it of painted glass,’ replied Cecilia, colouring a little.

‘And where will you get the glass?’ asked Kate.

‘I shall paint it myself.’ Julian burst out laughing.

‘I do believe,’ he said, ‘the silly child thinks

she can paint glass with water-colours. Don't you know, goose, that the first shower will wash it all off ?'

'But she would not paint the glass on the outside, but inside. You know, Julian, that no wet will come, unless your roof is so bad as to let the rain in,' urged Pen.

'I have no doubt myself,' interposed Kate, 'that the painted window will be the best part of the whole concern; at any rate, let us get into the boat, and think of going home. Your great stone, you see, Pen, has answered very well; and we have heard nothing about your floor: how do you mean to make it ?'

'I have a plan,' said Pen; 'my floor will be as pretty as Cecilia's window perhaps, and that is sure to be pretty.'

'Is it so sure?' asked Julian. 'I doubt it very much indeed. Come, Ciss, you did not, after all, explain how you mean to do it.'

'I do not wish to tell,' said Cecilia; 'don't you remember that there was a bargain, not to interfere with each other's work ?'

'But we have told what we want in the way of materials, and you might as well be communicative too. Oh! by-the-bye, I won't take more than my turn of rowing. Kate and Pen did their part as we went, and I won't let off you and Paul: come along, here's your oar.' And he gave Cecilia a rough pull.

‘I cannot row, Julian,’ said Cecilia. ‘When we came in the boat whilst you were at school, I always steered. Kate generally rowed, and sometimes Pen helped her; but I never did.’

‘Then do it now, you idle thing; come, I shall like to see your first attempts.’

‘Try with a good will, dear Cecilia,’ said Kate; ‘you know we shall perpetually be coming down to the island and wanting things fetched from the house; and you will find it very convenient to be able to row.’

Thus encouraged, Cecilia took the offered place, and attempted, very hurriedly, to give the oar a strong pull. The first attempt nearly jerked her forward on her face, as the oar was far too deep in the water; and in trying to remedy this the next time, she gave the pull so near the top of the water, that little or no resistance was made, and she fell backwards off the seat, to Julian’s and Paul’s extreme amusement. Much discomfited by their peals of laughter, Cecilia threw down the oar, and was about to resume her place by Kate; but Julian stopped her.

‘No, no; you are not to give it up in that way, or you will never learn: sit down again; we will have three or four more summersets, before we get back to the other lake.’

‘Please let me pass, Julian; I don’t like to try again; I really cannot.’

‘Come, Julian,’ interrupted Kate, as a struggle

commenced, Cecilia endeavouring to push past her brother, and Julian trying to replace her on the bench; 'at this rate we shall have five summersets into the water, and I by no means wish for a dip in my clothes: so pray, Julian, allow Cecilia to come across and practise rowing by herself, and I will give her a lesson; she will never manage it in the face of your ridicule. Take my hand, Cecilia, and come over; you have tried, so Julian must let you off.'

'You spoil her sadly, cousin Kate,' remarked Julian; 'now you should have let me alone, and I would soon have made her row: what soft things girls are, to be sure!'

'You may row yourself for saying that, Julian,' cried Pen, throwing down the oar that she had taken from her sister's hand.

'I am afraid that starving in a desert island would not improve your tempers,' remarked Kate; 'is the unusual absence of luncheon the cause of all this bickering? Do behave like a sensible boy, Julian; row us into the lake, and then Paul and I will take each an oar.' In this way they again reached the boat-house. As soon as they touched the landing-place, Julian sprang out, and without looking back, walked away, saying, 'I took the boat out of the boat-house, so some one else may put it in again.'

'Now, Paul, you must exert yourself a little, as Julian has left it all to us.'

‘I cannot get the boat in by myself, cousin Kate.’

‘What! do you mean to say that you, a boy of ten years old, are obliged to ask help of girls, in order to do so simple a thing?’

‘I shall manage it very easily without asking help of any one, for I will just leave it tied to the landing-place. I don’t see the use of the boat-house at all; it will save us a great deal of trouble if we find the boat out here ready for us the next time we come down.’

‘Especially if it should be full of rain water,’ said Kate, ‘the oars stolen, and the cushions saturated. It would take us at least half an hour to bale out the water, to say nothing of the difficulty of rowing without oars.’ Paul looked rather silly.

‘Will you get out, Cecilia and Pen,’ continued Kate; ‘and I will help Paul to accomplish this difficult feat?’ The boat glided easily into its abode; and having locked the gate that closed the opening from the boat-house into the lake, they crept through the narrow little passage into the field.

‘We have had quite a long expedition, cousin Kate, have we not?’ said Cecilia; ‘how pleasant the summer time is when we can spend so much time out of doors! I am always so sorry when the leaves begin to fall, and autumn comes on.’

‘Yes,’ replied Kate; ‘but I do not know that altogether winter is not preferable. There is so much idle time in summer, and one feels so dis-

inclined to sit steadily in the house when this brilliant sort of weather tempts one out.'

'That is true indeed; we never make so much progress in drawing or music during the summer, and needlework is scarcely done at all, and not so much reading. I do like winter too, certainly.'

'So do I,' said Pen; 'it is so snug with a good fire, and a nice long evening. I don't know which I like best.'

'Nor I,' said Paul; 'I don't know which I like best, I never thought about it; I like to-day.'

'That is the best way, Paul,' said Kate; 'enjoy the present, whatever it may be; all our seasons are pleasant and nice in turn, and I am quite glad to reach home. I shall have a pleasant hour to read quietly before dinner.'

'I wonder where Julian is gone!' said Paul, looking about him in a lost kind of way.

'Cannot you exist for ten minutes without Julian?' asked Kate, laughing; 'cannot you come in with us, and sit down in peace?'

'No, I would rather look for Julian; I dare say he is in the stable.' And away he went.

'Suppose we take a ride to-morrow afternoon,' said Kate, as they went into the dining-room; 'it will not do to have rowing and the island every day; we shall all be tired of it.'

'I should like a ride very much,' said Cecilia; 'only I am afraid that Julian will amuse himself by making my pony kick, and that is what I particu-



larly dislike. Very likely they would both prefer a good gallop, with only Harrison the groom.'

'But I wish to accustom them to pass their time with us pleasantly and reasonably, so I shall not propose the groom at all; I rather think Julian passes too much time with him already.'

'I should like a good scamper with Paul very much,' said Pen; 'cannot we leave Julian to work at his roof?'

'No, Pen, don't let him suppose that we want to be rid of him; we will see if they are inclined for the ride when they come in to dinner.'

'Well, children,' said Mr Latimer, 'how have you amused yourselves to-day?' And they all began to talk about the island, and the work they had planned.

'It is very well,' he said; 'I give you leave to do whatever you like with the island; if you are happy together, and do not dispute, I am quite content. What say you, Kate? do you think you can put up with these two rough boys for the next six weeks, judging by what you have seen to-day?'

'Oh yes, uncle, I believe we shall be very happy together; we are to study in the morning, and we have plenty of amusement out of doors for the afternoons. I expect they will be an agreeable addition to our number.' Julian was rather surprised. He felt conscious that he had not been particularly agreeable during their excursion on the lake, and he had rather expected a complaint respecting his rude

way of leaving them at the landing. 'I declare,' he thought to himself, 'she is good-natured, and does not bear malice, for I really was rude.' Kate went on—

'I think, Julian, though we have so much to do on the island, we might vary our afternoons a little: what do you say to a ride to-morrow?'

'That is the very thing I was going to say,' cried Julian. 'I should have had a ride to-day, but one of my pony's shoes had something amiss; now it is all right, so I must ride to-morrow.'

'Well, we wish to ride too; are there steeds enough for us all? Whose property, Pen, is the sprightly little grey that I have ridden?'

'Oh, Riquet is Paul's pony, cousin Kate. You know he has an odd little tuft on his forehead. We called him after the fairy-tale prince, "Riquet with the Tuft."'

'Did you ride Riquet?' cried Paul. 'Dear me, I thought he was much too spirited a pony for a girl to ride!'

'I actually contrived, Paul, to keep my seat, and not be ignominiously thrown. But what will you say to Cecilia's having ridden one of your father's horses?'

'It was the one, Kate,' interposed Cecilia, 'that mama used formerly to ride, and it is tolerably quiet now; easier, I think, to ride than either Riquet or our own pony, though it looks larger.'

'Then perhaps I might ride Myrtle. Is not

that its name? But what then would do for you, Cecilia?’

‘There is a pony at the farm,’ said Pen, ‘that we have sometimes borrowed. I dare say I could have that to-morrow, and Cecilia will ride Tom-Tit.’

‘I am glad,’ said Mr Latimer, ‘that you can amuse yourselves so well, for I am thinking of going down to Pau shortly to see mama, and I shall be able to think that you are occupying yourselves rationally and pleasantly here.’

‘When do you think of going, uncle?’ asked Kate; for she felt that the boys were still rather strangers to her, and she would have been better pleased that her uncle had remained at home.

‘This is Friday,’ he replied. ‘I do not like starting at the end of the week. Probably I shall go on Monday. You will make up a little parcel of letters for me to take, for you may be sure mama will expect one from each.’

‘Oh, we shall have plenty of time to write,’ cried Pen, ‘to-morrow and the next day. I shall keep mine open till the very last minute, so as to tell her everything, and I will begin it to-night.’ Cecilia said she would do the same; and for the best part of the evening they were very busy writing. In order to deter Julian from peeping over their shoulders, and teasing them about their letters, Kate persuaded him to engage in another game of chess. He was rather unwilling, because he could

not bear to be beaten ; but still he did not wish to let Kate possess herself with the idea of being the better player : so he tried his very best, and succeeded in making it a drawn game. This was a little more comforting to his vanity ; he was well pleased to rest there, and not risk a defeat in another game. The letters were still in progress, so Kate considered what she could find to occupy him. Mr Latimer was sitting reading in the great arm-chair, so it must be something quiet. There was a large old-fashioned ebony cabinet in the room, which had always been forbidden ground to the children. Their mother had kept shells and minerals, and a variety of odd things, in it. During the spring she had been amused, whilst lying on the sofa, by arranging a small collection of eggs which Pen and Cecilia had brought her, taking one from each nest they found. At first, these eggs had been laid on cotton wool, and the name of each was on a slip of paper ; but in taking the drawers in and out, they were shaken and displaced so often, that Mrs Latimer had begun to fix them by couples on pieces of cardboard. As only a few were so placed, there was a drawer full of eggs waiting to be arranged.

‘ Julian,’ said Kate, ‘ of course you are well acquainted with all the English birds’ eggs, at any rate with those of our small song-birds ; you would be no proper schoolboy otherwise. Now, I should like to have the contents of this drawer nicely in

order for your mama when she returns.' As she spoke, she took out one of the deep cabinet drawers, and placed it on the table before Julian.

'Oh, what a famous lot of eggs!' he exclaimed; 'where did mama get them all?'

'Every one, I believe,' replied Kate, 'was procured by the active hands of your two sisters. Perhaps you are not aware that Pen can climb a tree like a squirrel, and that Cecilia's eyes are sure to spy out a nest, if there be one, in a hedge.'

'Well, it is very queer,' muttered Julian. 'Many of the boys collected eggs. I did, and Paul too, but we never had half so many.'

'Perhaps you were not very careful of them when procured,' said Kate; 'they are such fragile things, that, if left about or roughly handled, they are soon destroyed. I imagine that not one brought to your mama was ever broken, or even cracked. As you have already interested yourself with eggs, you will be able to help me in sorting and naming these. Do you see how nicely these two or three are done?'

'Those are robins' eggs,' said Julian. 'Oh, there is the name very neatly written on the card. Did mama do that?'

'Yes,' replied Kate. 'She had just begun to rearrange this collection. What do you say to finishing it? You know the names, and I can write them.'

'I am not so very sure, cousin Kate,' returned

Julian, 'that I do know them all ; but I know a good many. Where are the cards ; and what must we stick the eggs on with ?'

'Here is a pack of plain cards, just the same size as those which are used ; and I think I have a little bottle of strong cement, which I will fetch. Meantime, will you seek out two or three couples of eggs, ready to stick on ?' Julian seated himself before the drawer.

'Do you know, cousin Kate,' he said, 'that I feel it quite a wonder to be able to look into or touch this drawer ? Mama never allowed any of us to meddle with the cabinet ; and I do not even know what is in all the other drawers.'

'I can quite understand,' said Kate, smiling, 'that if anything precious or fragile was kept there, the first thing needful would be to keep a very rough, inquisitive boy's fingers away from it ; but, now you are older and wiser, I am sure you will not bring me into disgrace and trouble by spoiling the eggs I have trusted you with.'

'No indeed,' he replied ; 'I will handle them as gently as mama could do herself.' And Kate left the room to look for the cement. When she returned, Julian had picked out three or four couples.

'Look here, Kate,' he said, 'I am getting on famously ; I know what these are. This very small white one, beautifully clear and delicate, is a sand-martin. I can tell you where it builds too.'

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‘Well,’ said Kate, ‘I think it would be very nice to write below the eggs, on the same card, “Builds in such a place.”’

‘Yes. Then will you write under these two, “Builds in a hole in a quarry or chalk-pit?” Do you think mama will like us to do this, Kate?’

‘Yes, I think she will be quite pleased to think you have occupied yourself with her treasures. Now, see, I have bent my card like hers, and written sand-martin on the turned-up piece at the back, and the place of building below. Are these two the best specimens of sand-martin?’

‘Yes; they are quite perfect. Do let me put the cement on, and fix them. What a nice brush for doing it!’ The little pair of eggs was nicely fixed on.

‘Now,’ said Julian, ‘here are two robins’ eggs. I have often found their nests. There is an old barn at school, with one wall covered with ivy, and the robins build there. So write, “Builds in an ivy-covered wall.” The three pretty green ones are hedge-sparrows. “Builds in a privet hedge.”’ And so he went on, Kate preparing the card and writing the name, and Julian sticking them on. Much pleased with his employment, the evening passed quickly and quietly.

## CHAPTER IV.

Order restored—A little Jealousy—The Ride—A Race—  
Teasing.

THE following morning, Kate, with the two girls, repaired as usual to the schoolroom, and commenced their work. Julian and Paul had gone out immediately after breakfast; so that a good half-hour was allowed to Cecilia and Pen, without any interruption. Then they heard the slamming of two or three doors, which was the general sign of Paul's entrance into the house; and the young gentleman made his appearance, looking very hot, and very smiling.

'You look as if you had been happily occupied, Paul,' said Kate; 'but we must have your story afterwards. Pray sit down, and take your work quietly. Go on, Cecilia.' Paul, who had been overflowing with some piece of news, looked rather discomposed at being unceremoniously silenced in this way, especially as he saw that Pen was mischievously smiling at his discomfiture behind her slate. However, he took his book, and the paper that had been laid ready for him; and his sisters' lessons went on as peaceably as if he had not been there. Presently Julian's footstep was heard.

'How glad I am,' said Cecilia, 'that my reading



is finished ! now I can do my writing, and I shall not mind Julian's talking.'

'But Pen has to read,' said Kate ; 'so I can have no talking at present.'

'I shall be beforehand with you all,' cried Julian, coming noisily into the room. 'I have ordered my tiles and my mortar, and shall be ready to work at my roof this afternoon, or as soon as we come back from the ride.'

'Now, cousin Kate,' exclaimed Paul, 'that is not fair. You would not let me say one word about what I had been doing, and now you listen to all Julian says.'

'My dear Paul,' said Kate, 'when Julian comes in open-mouthed, telling his adventures before he is well inside the door, what can I do but listen ? Your entrance was a little more reasonable, and your quietness afterwards, at my request, was pleasant and sensible. I can only hope that Julian will be as accommodating, and allow us to go on steadily with our work.' Julian felt much inclined to make a noise, and to declare that he would not work ; but, rather ashamed of being less well-behaved than his younger brother, he took his place near the window, and lazily turned over the leaves of his Virgil.

'Now, Julian,' said Kate, 'it is twelve o'clock, and Cecilia and Pen will draw for half an hour. Will you continue your reading, or will you begin your map ?'

'Oh ! if they are going to draw, I shall draw too,' said Julian.

‘And I too,’ cried Paul, thrusting his books out of his way, and dragging the drawing-paper out of the table-drawer.

‘Did you write for our paint-boxes, Kate?’ said he; ‘we have none here.’

‘Yes,’ returned Kate. ‘I recollected to write yesterday for your boxes; and until they arrive, I will lend you mine: that is, I will lend you pencils, and ruler, and brushes, and I will rub what colour you require on the plates or palettes. You must not be affronted that I do not let you touch my colours, for I am very particular about my things, and like to keep them very clean and neat.’ Cecilia and Pen had taken out their own materials, and had set to work. Julian went round to look at their drawings.

‘Oh, what a pretty landscape!’ he exclaimed. ‘Did you do all that, so far, by yourself, Cecilia? All that oak tree, and the blue distance?’

‘Yes,’ said Cecilia, ‘Kate told me what colours I had better use, but she has not put one touch in my drawing.’

‘And where did you get that nice copy? Is it one of mama’s?’

‘No; it is Kate’s; she has a nice portfolio of her own landscapes; and I have copied several.’

‘Why, Kate,’ said Julian, ‘I do believe it is as well done as any of mama’s. Will you let me copy some of yours? How provoking it is to have to do that stupid map! I would so much rather draw something pretty like this.’

‘The map will not take a very long time,’ observed Kate. ‘If you worked at it for an hour every morning it would soon be done, and then you might copy any of my landscapes that you like.’

‘Well, I must begin, then,’ replied Julian. ‘Are you going to lend me this ruler and compasses? Thank you, cousin Kate. Now for the tormenting degrees.’ And Julian subsided into silence for a while. Paul was, during this dialogue, staring over Pen’s shoulder. Pen was drawing a ruined castle and drawbridge, with a soft, dark pencil; and the bold strokes with which she was shading the rough, broken wall were very effective.

‘Come, Paul,’ said Kate, touching his shoulder, ‘are you not beginning your map? It will not progress much if you do nothing but watch Pen.’

‘Oh! the nasty map. I should not mind it so much if I had come to the colouring, but I really cannot do the degrees, and I should like to draw something like this of Pen’s.’

‘Well, so you can; get your map done, and then do as many ruined castles as you like. You can take that drawing, for Pen will soon have finished her copy; and as for your degrees, I think I must have pity on you, and do them for you.’

‘Yes! do, Kate,’ cried Pen, ‘for then he will the sooner finish it, and we can copy the same thing; and it will be great fun to see whose is the best—Paul’s or mine.’

‘What do you say to that, Paul?’ asked Kate;

‘do you think there will be any doubt on that point?’

‘No, cousin Kate, I do not; I give in. Although Pen is a girl, I allow that she draws better than I can.’ Pen clapped her hands.

‘That is famous, Paul; I never expected to hear you say such a thing. Now if Julian will make the same confession respecting Cecilia’s painting, we shall feel as if we really were worth something.’

‘But I don’t confess any such thing,’ said Julian sharply; ‘I never had so pretty a copy, and I believe that if I try to do it, it will be just as well as Cecilia’s. We shall see, as soon as this map is out of the way.’ Kate was now busy with Paul’s degrees.

‘Cousin Kate,’ said he, ‘how carefully you do them! It does not signify taking so much trouble, you need not measure the degrees with a pair of compasses; guessing at them does as well.’

‘I think not, Paul,’ replied Kate; ‘it was no wonder your degrees looked uneven and bad if you only guessed at them. If the map is to be done at all, it is worth while to do it well; you will find that a good plan to follow. Besides, for my own sake, I wish to do this skeleton of your map well, for your master will certainly say, “Did you do the whole of this yourself, Paul?” And when you reply, “No, it was done by my cousin Kate,” I should not like him to remark, “Then cousin Kate is a very untidy, careless person.”’

‘Well, he will not say so, certainly; for that is beautiful, just like the printed ones.’

‘It is the half-hour, Kate,’ said Cecilia; ‘shall I go to my music?’

‘Yes, certainly, it will not interrupt our drawing in the least,’ replied Kate. So Cecilia opened the piano, and commenced her practice.

‘Did I hear that piano before to-day?’ asked Julian.

‘Yes, of course you did,’ said Pen; ‘you heard me play from half-past seven till eight, and then Cecilia from eight to nine.’

‘And who teaches you?’ said Paul.

‘Cousin Kate, to be sure; she teaches us everything now.’

‘Do you mean that Kate really gets up in time to be ready to teach you music at half-past seven?’

‘Yes, she really does,’ said Pen; ‘is it not very kind of her?’

‘Do you not know, Julian,’ said Kate, ‘that in order to make it convenient and pleasant for your mama to spend this winter abroad, I promised to fill her place here to the best of my ability? Therefore I cannot, in common honesty, neglect doing anything that I think she would have done for you.’

‘You do more with us a great deal,’ observed Pen, ‘than mama did for the last four or five months that she was at home.’

‘That,’ replied Kate, ‘was on account of her failing health. She was not able, for instance, to

be up early in the morning, or to bear hearing Pen's discords for half an hour.' Pen laughed.

'I know, cousin Kate, I am very stupid at music, and I think it is the more good-natured of you to try and teach me.'

'All people,' said Kate, 'should do the utmost in their power to help those around them, beginning, of course, with their own family and relations. I love to be useful.'

'I hope I shall be useful when I am grown up,' said Pen, 'and able to do things as well as you can.'

'I think you promise very well, dear Pen,' replied Kate; 'I expect to see you a very active and useful woman.'

'And what do you expect to see me?' asked Julian.

'Really, I can scarcely pretend to answer that question yet. I have had the entire care of Pen for three months, so I can form a good estimate of her character; but having only been two days with you and Paul, it would be impossible for me to form a just opinion of either of you.'

'But please tell me, cousin Kate, what you think of me, as far as you have seen,' urged Julian.

'Of your acquirements, then,' replied Kate, 'I should say that your conceit will at present be a bar to your excelling in anything; and for your disposition, you would be more amiable did you think less of yourself and more of others—were you, in fact, less selfish.'

‘Selfish and conceited ; that is but a bad sort of character, cousin Kate. I really do not recollect being either particularly selfish or particularly conceited since I came home ; indeed, I do not know how I have shown either of those bad qualities.’

‘You know, Julian, the flutter of a leaf will show which way the wind blows ; and in the same manner, very small actions, and very small words, insignificant in themselves, will show the bent of any one’s character. Let us hope that when I have known you six weeks instead of two days, I shall neither think you selfish nor conceited.’

‘And what do you think of Paul, cousin Kate?’ asked Pen.

‘Paul is at present such a copy of Julian, that I cannot say I have even guessed at his real character. If he would try to think and act for himself, without blindly doing just what Julian does, I should then be able to judge. Now, Paul, look at your skeleton map, and say what you think of it.’

‘I think it is quite beautiful, cousin Kate, and I feel afraid of spoiling it by drawing my map in it.’

‘Then you will try to do it with extreme neatness, will you not ? And now for luncheon. Does any one feel inclined to go without it again to-day ?’

‘I do not, for one,’ said Julian, stretching himself. ‘I have only done ten lines of Virgil this morning, and drawn the degrees on the north and

west of my map, and I declare that I am more tired and more hungry than I was with all that rowing and walking about yesterday.'

'But you have also learnt that you are selfish and conceited,' said Pen slyly; 'you forgot to reckon up that lesson.' Julian replied to this by a good tug at Pen's long hair. She escaped round the table, and coming past Paul, he repeated the tug.

'There, was I not right?' cried Kate; 'you pull Pen's hair merely because Julian did so, although she merited no punishment from you, having only made a very saucy speech to Julian. Do you see how monkey-like your conduct is?'

'The monkey is too hungry to speak,' said Pen; and they ran off to the dining-room, where all the party seemed inclined to make amends for the fasting of the day before.

'May I ask,' said Kate, 'if any orders have been given respecting ponies? Did you think, Julian, of the arrangement we made about riding to-day?'

'Yes, I did think of it. I told Harrison that I should want my own pony, and Paul, Riquet; and that I thought Tom-Tit and Myrtle would also be wanted with the side-saddles.'

'And poor me,' cried Pen, 'am I to be left out?'

'No,' said Cecilia, 'you may ride, Pen, and I will stay at home.'

'I do not agree to that,' said Kate; 'was there



not something said about a farmer's pony that Pen could have ?'

'Oh, Kate!' said Julian, 'the farm is a mile off, it will hinder us so. Let Cecilia stay at home, as she is willing, and we can start immediately after luncheon.'

'I'll tell you,' said Paul; 'what is the use of Harrison coming behind us? Cannot Cecilia ride Jessy? she is a very quiet old creature.'

'No,' replied Kate, 'for I cannot consent to take the whole care and charge of four scampering wild creatures, and I must have Harrison to fall back upon in case of difficulty.'

'Well, then,' said Julian, rising, 'Pen or Cecilia must stay at home. I will go and order the ponies round.'

'Then I am not yet to change my mind respecting the selfishness, am I, Julian?'

'Why,' said Julian, stopping short, 'what is selfish? I cannot help there being no other pony.'

'But you might give up half an hour of your ride, in order to allow time for fetching the pony from the farm. Besides, you forget that we have habits to put on, and cannot mount this very moment.'

'How long will you be, then, before you are ready?' asked Julian.

'A quarter of an hour, I believe, will be the very shortest time.'

'Well, then, Kate, if you will make as much haste as you can, I will ride over to the farm and

fetch the pony for Pen, so that Cecilia may have Tom-Tit.'

'Thank you, Julian,' said Cecilia, 'you are very kind.' And Julian was out of the house in an instant.

'You see, Cecilia,' said Kate, 'he is not so bad after all. Do try to talk to him a little; be as you were before he came, and we shall get on nicely. Now let us hurry on our habits before the steeds appear. Up-stairs quickly, Pen!' Although Julian made all speed in mounting his pony and cantering off to the farm, when he returned he found Kate and his sisters standing ready dressed on the steps. Paul had been trotting backwards and forwards from the porch to the stable in the greatest impatience.

'Well, you have been quick,' cried Julian. 'I thought I should have been before you, but they loitered so dreadfully at the farm: first I could find no one but old Mrs Hunter, and she did not know whether the pony was in or not; and when I looked into the stable and found it there, she would not let me take it without sending her grandson to ask leave. Then the saddle had to be found, and really I think I must have been half an hour. That's right, Pen, jump up.' Whilst Julian was talking, Kate and Cecilia had mounted; and Pen, too eager to wait for Harrison's help, managed to put her foot in the stirrup, and scramble up by herself, and the party proceeded down the park road.

'Which way are we going?' asked Cecilia, who had determined to try to talk.

‘I think Julian or Paul shall decide that matter,’ said Kate. ‘We have chosen our own rides lately, to-day we will trust to them. What say you, Paul?’

‘I say down the sandy lane and across the common, where there is a splendid place for a race; and then along the road to Denton, because I want to buy a lock for my door, and I cannot get it in the village.’

‘The common is very well,’ said Julian, ‘but after that I propose going round the low meadows, near the paper mill, because there are ditches there which are famous for leaping. And I am sure you do not like the town, cousin Kate.’

‘The country lanes and fields are pleasanter, certainly, than the high road and the streets. Will you agree, Paul,’ said Kate, ‘to put off the town, and keep to the country to-day?’

‘Then, if I am behind-hand with my door, you must remember that it is not my fault, cousin Kate.’

‘Oh, Paul!’ said Cecilia, ‘you will be as forward as any one. We have done nothing yet about procuring our materials, and I fancy you have already settled something about yours. Have you not?’

‘Yes,’ said Paul. ‘I went down to the village directly after breakfast, and I bought two hinges, and I arranged about the wood famously.’

‘Now we are through the lodge,’ cried Julian, ‘let us take a good canter as far as the sandy lane.’ He and Kate led the way, closely followed by Paul and Cecilia. Pen’s pony, coming to the turn which

led back to its own home, preferred turning down that way, and it was as much as Pen could do to oblige the stubborn little animal to follow her companions. Her brothers were highly amused on looking back; but, seeing her dilemma, Harrison came to her assistance. But she begged that he would let her manage by herself, and at last gained her point, and soon reached the rest of the party.

‘Well done, little Pen,’ said Julian; ‘I thought the farmer would have beaten you.’

‘No indeed,’ replied she; ‘I am not so very bad at riding, especially on such a solid slow creature as this. I believe my arm will be tired with whipping him before we return.’

‘I will keep behind you, and whip him for you,’ said Paul. ‘Pass me, for we can only go one by one down this lane.’ The common at the end of the sandy lane had some beautiful pieces of smooth grass, and was interspersed with patches of furze bushes, with here and there a broom plant; the air was very fresh and pleasant, and the ponies threw up their heads, and seemed quite eager for a race.

‘Now, Cecilia,’ cried Julian, ‘we will go along this straight road of grass, then round the outside edge of the common, and back to this spot, you and I; come along.’ Julian was a little surprised that Cecilia made no objection.

‘We shall remain here,’ said Kate, ‘and watch your return. The first that touches my hand wins.’ And off they cantered. Cecilia’s pony was a very

slight, spirited creature, and her weight so small, that in speed it was quite a match for Julian's larger and stronger pony, and it kept close by his side as far as the straight road went. But as Cecilia was outside at the turn, she lost a little way, and could not again regain her place by Julian's side; and again at the next turn she lost a little more, so that Julian's outstretched hand touched Kate's a moment before Cecilia arrived.

'A very nice race,' said Kate. 'Tom-Tit kept up very well indeed, Cecilia.'

'But Julian fairly beat, did he not?' said Paul. 'Why did you not whip Tom-Tit, Ciss? A good cut or two would have quickened his pace.'

'But I never whip him,' said Cecilia. 'He was quite willing to try, without any whipping, and I should be sorry to force him to go too quick, poor fellow. Now, Paul, it is your turn with Pen.'

'Riquet to race with that stubborn old pony, indeed,' said Paul contemptuously. 'No indeed; but I will try with Kate and Myrtle.'

'If Myrtle will condescend,' said Kate, laughing; 'come, we will just take the same round.' This time Myrtle's longer legs soon distanced the pretty little Welsh pony, in spite of his spirit, and in spite of the switches that Paul did not spare when he found himself being distanced; and Pen clapped her hands as Kate touched Cecilia.

'There, Julian,' she cried; 'first the boy beat, but the next time the girl; so we are even to-day.'

‘Myrtle and Riquet were not a fair match,’ muttered Paul.

‘No indeed,’ retorted Pen; ‘I think my farmer would be far better suited to race with him. Shall we try?’ Paul replied by a switch on the despised farmer’s pony, which had the effect of making him kick, and throwing Pen so forward on his neck that she recovered her seat with difficulty.

‘Paul,’ remarked Kate, ‘I beg that you will not use your whip on any one’s steed but your own. I do not wish Pen to have a fall, and a sudden kick like that is very likely to throw her.’

‘That is the consequence of those foolish side-saddles,’ said Julian, with an important air; ‘I really wonder you do not oftener tumble off.’

‘No doubt a lady’s seat is not so secure as yours,’ answered Kate; ‘still I feel tolerably firm, and think it would take a very violent jerk to throw me off. But if you consider our saddles so insecure, there is all the more reason for abstaining from silly tricks that might throw us.’

‘That is for you, Paul,’ observed Julian. ‘I have not touched Tom-Tit once to-day; have I, Ciss?’

‘No indeed: I suppose, Julian, as you took some trouble to enable me to ride at all to-day, you thought you might as well let me enjoy it in peace.’

‘Precisely, and now we leave the common. Is it to be town or country?’

‘Let it be country to-day,’ said Kate.

‘And, Paul,’ added Cecilia, ‘I shall certainly

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have to go to Denton shortly, for I know I shall not find what I want for my windows, in the village; so we can go together if the others do not wish. I suppose we shall go to work to-morrow at the little house on the island.'

'Yes,' said Julian, 'I propose that we work at it for a whole week.'

'Were you to do so,' replied Kate, 'I think you would be quite weary of it before the week's end. To-morrow, I think we shall all set to work with spirit and energy. The next day I should propose doing something else, and so on.'

'If you think it bad, cousin Kate, to keep to the same thing every day, of course we must not think of doing lessons every day.'

'That is another kind of work,' returned Kate. 'I consider the lessons as the business, the regular duty of each day. But this island work, or gardening, or archery, or those sort of things, are mere matters of amusement, and need to be varied, in order to keep up their interest.' They were now riding along a shady lane, in which the hazels that grew in the hedges here and there stooped low down, and nearly crossed the road. Kate was first, Julian rode next, and behind him Cecilia. Julian caught at one of the boughs, and, letting it go suddenly, it swung back directly in Cecilia's face. Being but a slight twig, it did not hurt her, and she made no remark. Julian repeated the trick, and this time Cecilia stooped low enough to allow

the branch to pass over her head. Paul was behind Cecilia, and he could not resist the temptation of giving Pen similar little buffets in the face; so he caught the boughs when they had passed over Cecilia, and let them go again so as to flap against Pen.

‘That is enough, Julian,’ at last said Cecilia. ‘I am tired of stooping every minute; please leave off knocking the boughs against me.’

‘Don’t stoop if you are tired,’ replied Julian; ‘these leafy twigs won’t hurt you.’

‘But they do hurt,’ cried Pen; ‘they scratch our faces, and are very disagreeable. Be quiet, Paul. Kate, Kate, do you see how Julian is plaguing Cecilia?’ Kate turned round.

‘Julian,’ she said, ‘will you let Cecilia ride next to me? draw up your pony on one side, and let her pass.’ Julian had never yet refused to do anything that Kate asked; her requests were made in so quiet a way, with a sort of certainty that they were to be obeyed, that he had begun to acquire a sort of habit of acquiescing immediately. So, although the love of teasing was strongly upon him just then, he allowed Cecilia room just to squeeze herself past, and to take his place behind Kate. The cousins then began a discussion about the ferns in the hedge; for they had formed a small fernery in Cecilia’s garden, and had amused themselves much with collecting the different sorts. But Tom-Tit began to fidget very much, and to try to push on,



which Cecilia could not allow, because Kate was close before her; so she held him in as firmly as she could, patted his neck, and tried to soothe him. Presently a violent kick showed his uneasiness. Cecilia was a remarkably good rider, so she was not unseated by the suddenness of the plunge; but she said to Julian—

‘I think you are too near me, Julian; Tom-Tit does not like your pony’s head touching him every moment. Please keep a little further back.’ Julian made a sort of pretence of reining in his pony, and Cecilia resumed what she had been saying to Kate. Another sharp kick.

‘What can be the matter, Kate?’ said Cecilia; ‘it is very tiresome that my pony will not go quietly. Look how he is fidgeting about.’ A loud laugh from Paul drew Kate’s attention to him and to Julian.

‘Oh, how dull you are, Ciss!’ cried Paul; ‘and cousin Kate too: don’t you see the long fern that Julian has been tickling Tom-Tit’s legs with all this time?’

‘I will pay you off for telling, Master Paul, before we reach home,’ said Julian, trying to reach him with his riding whip; ‘you have spoilt my fun. I wonder how long Ciss would have gone on wondering what was the matter with her pony!’

‘I am still wondering at you, Julian,’ said Kate. ‘Had your sister been a less practised horsewoman, those kicks might easily have thrown her; and

with all these ponies in so narrow a lane, there might have been much mischief done. However, here we emerge into the meadow; now pray come beside me, Julian, and let your sister alone. Off with you, Cecilia and Pen, for a nice canter.' Paul followed them along the soft green meadow.

'How Pen does stoop! Did you ever see a girl sit on horseback in such a way?' said Julian. 'I'll try if I can't make her mend that.' And he cantered after his sisters; and, catching Pen by the hair, exclaimed, 'Sit up, Pen; your shoulders are as round as an old woman's: why do you stoop so?'

'Oh! it is more comfortable,' replied Pen. 'Do leave me alone, Julian. Will you speak to him, cousin Kate?'

'I must confess that he is right in objecting to your hump-backed fashion of riding, Pen; you know I have often spoken about it, though without tugging your hair in that unmerciful way.'

'I assure you, cousin Kate,' said Julian, 'she will mind my tugging her hair more than your speaking gently to her. See now if she does not alter her way of sitting in consequence of my teasing.' Full of the idea of proving this to Kate, Julian gave Pen no peace for the rest of the ride, pulled her hair, made her pony kick, pushed her into the roughest parts of the meadow, and so on. Pen took it all in good part; and Kate, thinking her quite able to defend herself, did not interfere. But teasing is no pleasure if the person will not be

teased, and the evident annoyance felt by Cecilia when Julian behaved in a similar way towards her was far more exciting. Therefore, when Julian had worried his younger sister all along the first meadow, he found the occupation becoming rather dull, and he turned to Cecilia.

‘Now,’ said he, ‘here is a famous ditch; have you ever tried Tom-Tit at leaping, Ciss?’

‘No,’ she said, ‘I have practised him over the lowest bar in the paddock, but never across a ditch, and I should not like to begin with one so wide as this.’

‘Nonsense,’ returned Julian, ‘this is not so wide here and there. I will pick you out a narrow part. See how Sultan will take the ditch.’ And drawing back a little, he cantered up to the ditch, and the pony cleared it beautifully.

‘That is very nice, and looked quite easy as you did it, Julian; but I dare not try myself.’

‘Oh, but you must,’ cried he; ‘I will come across again, and then we will leap it together.’ So he leapt the pony back to the side of the ditch, where Cecilia remained. The rest of the party had ridden to the further corner of the meadow, where a few planks and a gate enabled them to pass into the next meadow. Harrison alone stayed behind, watching the proceedings of his young master.

‘Here now, Ciss,’ said Julian; ‘come back a few steps, then keep his head straight, and whip him sharply, and he must go across.’ Cecilia tried, but

the switch she gave was not very heavy, and Tom-Tit stopped short at the brink, and then resolutely turned away.

‘You don’t half whip him,’ said Julian; ‘let me give him a good cut.’

‘I think, Master Julian,’ said Harrison, ‘you had best let it alone. Miss Cecilia would have gone over his head into the ditch that time had she not sat so firmly; but you see he does not take kindly to leaping, and we might have an accident.’

‘Oh no,’ cried Julian; ‘I am determined he shall leap.’

‘Then will you mount him, Julian,’ said Cecilia, ‘and try him at it yourself? When you have taught him to leap, then I will try.’

‘No,’ returned Julian, ‘don’t be such a frightened goose, Ciss.’ And he led her pony to a little distance from the ditch. ‘Now,’ said he, ‘take care, Cecilia; I will strike him sharply.’ Poor Cecilia thought her only plan was to lend herself to the attempt as well as she could; so she gathered together her reins, and held his head straight. Julian gave a smart cut to the pony, and with a sort of desperation it bounded well over the ditch. Cecilia was all but shaken out of the saddle.

‘There! you see it is quite easy!’ cried Julian. ‘Now canter away; we will try the next ditch.’ And they soon came up to Kate and her two companions, who had gone through the gate without witnessing Cecilia’s leap.

‘Did you see, cousin Kate,’ cried Julian, ‘how I made Tom-Tit and Ciss leap over the ditch?’

‘No indeed,’ said Kate; ‘I am sorry I left you together;’ for she noticed Cecilia’s flushed cheek. ‘I am afraid you have obliged her to do what she did not like.’

‘Oh, but she will soon like it; we are going to try this ditch now. Come, Cecilia.’

‘No,’ said Cecilia, ‘I will not try any more to-day.’

‘Will you open that gate if you please, Harrison?’ said Kate; ‘we will get out of the neighbourhood of these ditches.’ And waiting for no reply from Julian, they passed out of the meadow into a little by-lane, which brought them out on the high road. Here they trotted on quietly, Cecilia keeping by Kate’s side, and Julian riding behind them, all rather sulkily. When they reached home, Julian passed on at once to the stables.

‘Here, Paul,’ said Kate, ‘do you not think that it would be proper and pleasant were you to help us to dismount?’

‘Cannot Harrison do that?’ said Paul.

‘Certainly he can, but I wish you to learn to be polite and attentive; let me see you hold Cecilia’s bridle while she springs off. Now do the same service to Pen. There! now I will release you from further attendance.’ And Paul followed his brother into the stable-yard.

## CHAPTER V.

Mr Latimer prepares to leave Home—<sup>3</sup>Letters and Gifts for Mother—Another Visit to the Island—Fresh Difficulties.

WHEN they met at dinner, Mr Latimer inquired how they had passed the day. Kate replied that they had spent the morning in study and drawing, and that afterwards they all had a ride together.

‘I am glad,’ said Mr Latimer, ‘that you are willing, Kate, to allow the boys to be your companions, for during the last holidays, they were much more with the grooms than I liked. Their mother was too ill to have them with her; they could not agree well with their sisters, and therefore had recourse to the stable. Had this been the case now, I should have been unwilling to have left home, much as I wish to see how matters are going on at Pau. And I feel extremely obliged to you, Kate, that you are enabling me to go without misgivings, and to carry a good report with me.’

‘Are you then decided about leaving us on Tuesday?’ asked Kate.

‘Yes, I have made all arrangements for so doing.’

‘May we go to the station with you?’ asked Julian.

‘Yes, if you like the drive there and back, I shall be glad of your company, and of Paul’s also.’

‘I thank you, papa,’ replied Paul; ‘I shall like to go very much, and we shall not get back here till near the middle of the day; so I shall miss the morning in the schoolroom, and I shall not be sorry for that.’

‘And in the afternoon, papa,’ said Pen, ‘we are going to work hard at our island. By-the-bye, Paul, have you begun your letter to mama?’

‘No, I shall have time to-morrow; perhaps I had better begin this evening.’ So they seated themselves in the drawing-room with their desks.

‘Look,’ said Pen, displaying a large sheet closely written, ‘I have said all that to mama. I told her all about the island, and how we were going to manage about our lessons; and now I am going to describe our ride to-day.’

‘Not forgetting, I suppose,’ said Julian, ‘to tell that I pulled your hair, and made Cecilia leap when she did not like it.’

‘I am not a tell-tale, Master Julian; I will let you tell your own story, and I will tell mine,’ returned Pen; and she applied herself diligently to her letter. Paul, with many grumbings and groanings, accomplished one sheet of note-paper; and then declaring that it was harder work than two schoolroom mornings, he went out. Julian had been affronted with Kate for interfering between him and Cecilia about the leaping, and he did not

choose to ask her about the birds' eggs, but took a book, and sat turning over the leaves, wondering whether she would mention it herself; but she took her desk and wrote, as well as the others.

'Are you not going to write, Julian?' at last she asked; 'or do you mean to put off your letter till to-morrow?'

'Oh, -I am not fond of writing letters,' he replied; 'and if Pen and Cecilia have told everything, it is of no use my repeating it. Of course I shall write, but half an hour will do for all I have to say.'

'Then, unless you wish to go out, perhaps you will continue our work of last night. Can I trust you to take out another drawer, and sort some of the eggs?' Julian did not choose to say that he was pleased, but he merely replied that he would take great care; and placing the drawer on the table, he was soon quite absorbed in his occupation.

'I cannot help you at all to-night,' said Kate; 'so if you like to wrap the eggs in a bit of cotton as you sort out the pairs, I will help you to fix and name them on Monday.' So the evening passed quietly away. The church to which they went on Sunday was nearly two miles distant, so that, with the walk there and back, the whole morning was occupied; in the afternoon the boys took a walk with their father, and Cecilia and Pen sat with Kate quietly reading. So Sunday passed away, and Mr Latimer's last day at home arrived. At



breakfast he said that Julian might accompany him to the house of a neighbouring gentleman, whom he wished to see before going abroad; and as it was at some distance, they would not return till dinner-time.

Lesson hours passed off happily, and Kate said, 'Shall we take a walk this afternoon, or shall we stay at home?'

'I should like a walk,' said Pen, who was always the first to speak.

'So should I,' added Cecilia, for she generally acceded to Pen's wishes.

'And what would Paul like?' asked Kate. Paul was not at all accustomed to being asked what he liked or wished. Usually he did, as a matter of course, exactly what Julian did, and he found it quite a trouble in Julian's absence to decide how he should employ his time. Seeing that Kate waited for an answer,

He said, 'Oh, I don't know; if you all go out, I will go with you.'

'And if we all stayed at home, you would stay at home,' cried Pen. 'Oh, Paul! what a stupid boy you are! Why don't you like something by yourself, not because other people like it?'

'As I am always with somebody else,' said Paul, 'it saves me the trouble of thinking about things for myself, and does just as well.' So they set out for their walk.

'Pray tell me, Paul,' said Kate, as they crossed

the park, 'are you intended for any profession? I suppose I need scarcely say, Do you wish to be anything especially?'

'I believe,' replied Paul, 'that papa means me to be in the law.'

'And do you like that arrangement?' asked Kate.

'I do not know,' Paul answered, with an indifferent air; 'I never thought much about it. I always heard that Julian was for the army, and I for the law.'

'Then before the time comes for you to speak in court, I hope you will begin to possess some ideas and opinions of your own. For when you have to plead some one's cause, what will you say if you retain your habit of not thinking about anything? You cannot always have Julian at your side to copy and to follow. Do, Paul, try to stand by yourself, to act for yourself, and to think for yourself.'

'We will ask your opinion on all passing subjects, Paul,' said Cecilia, laughing; 'so be prepared to think a great deal about everything that you see.'

Paul had nothing to reply. They arrived at a knoll in the wood, from which an opening in the trees gave them a lovely view over valley, lake, and park; and here they sat down to rest.

'I must confess,' said Kate to Cecilia, 'that my walk has been pleasanter for the absence of Julian; not because Julian is an annoyance to me,

but because you are cheerful and talkative when he is absent. I cannot tell you, Cecilia, how I regret your cold manner towards Julian.' Cecilia was as dumb on this point as Paul could have been, and during the walk homewards Kate did not renew the subject. Their father had desired that all letters and parcels that they wished to send should be made up in one package, and finished that evening. So after dinner they were all busy, and Kate promised to make up the package for them. Julian was ready first.

'Here is my note,' he cried.

'And here is mine,' said Cecilia, 'but I should like it folded up with my drawing.' And she left the room, returning presently with a flat paper parcel.

'Are you going to send mama a drawing, Ciss?' said Julian. 'Let me see it.' And he seized the parcel.

'Please let me unfasten it,' said Cecilia; 'you will tear the paper.'

'Yes, Julian,' interposed Kate, 'if she takes the trouble to undo her parcel, and fasten it up again to gratify you, the least you can do is to leave it in her own hands.' So Cecilia took off, first a brown paper, and then a smooth white wrapper.

'What a fuss!' said Julian; 'one would think it was something very precious.'

'So it is precious,' replied Kate. 'Cecilia has taken much trouble in doing it, and of course

wishes it to reach her mama's hands uncrumpled and clean. And to my aunt it will certainly be precious, showing that Cecilia has been industrious in order to send her a pretty little remembrance.' The drawing was a view of a blacksmith's shop, with two or three horses standing about the door; and beyond a bridge, over which was seen a village church surrounded with trees. In the foreground was a large spreading oak, whose branches overshadowed the blacksmith's. It was well done, and altogether a very pretty picture.

'I might have sent mama something like this if I had tried. How provoking it is, that I do not think of such things till it is too late!' cried Julian. 'I am sure I love mama quite as much, if not more, than my sisters; and yet it will seem otherwise, as I have only sent her a small note. Have you anything to go, Pen, besides your letter?'

'Yes, of course I have,' replied Pen; 'I have been getting it ready for a long time. Here it is; but I need not show it to you, because you know nothing about needlework.'

'Let me see, though,' said Julian, snatching the little package from her hand, and unrolling it. 'Why, it is nothing but a pocket-handkerchief.'

'But it is beautiful, fine cambric,' cried Pen, 'bought with my own saved-up money; and do you see that I have worked it all round the edge, and made her initials in the corner in satin stitch? So I know mama will like it, because she wished me

to do that sort of pretty delicate work, and cousin Kate has taught me since mama went. And here is my long letter, Kate.'

'And here is my letter,' said Paul.

'Altogether, a very fair package,' said Kate. 'Now, as you have to be up rather earlier to-morrow, I advise all to go to bed.'

Having breakfasted early, and seen the travellers off, Kate and the two girls repaired to the school-room, where they spent a very quiet morning, and got through their lessons much to the satisfaction of all parties. A short time before luncheon, Julian and Paul returned.

'Well, papa is gone,' said Julian; 'and though we did not see very much of him during the day, still I feel quite left behind and lonely.'

'Lonely!' cried Pen, 'with three of us, and Paul. That is very rude of you, Julian.'

'No,' interposed Kate, 'I quite understand what Julian feels. I think there is nothing more unpleasant than seeing any one off by train. There is such a rejoicing sort of rush in the whirling away of the carriages, and such a blank look about the deserted station, that it requires quite an effort to return to one's usual employments and interests.'

'Exactly,' said Julian; 'that is the very way that I feel. I am so glad the lesson time is over. I can eat luncheon, but I could not do lessons.'

'Come, then, let us go to luncheon,' returned Kate; 'and after that we shall perhaps feel in

better plight for the island. How are you inclined, Paul ?'

'I am inclined to eat just now,' he replied, 'and then I dare say I shall like to go to the island.'

'Do you feel sorry papa is gone ?' asked Pen.

'I don't know. I did not see him often. I think it does not make much difference to me,' said Paul.

'So long as you have everything you want at home,' said Pen.

'I fear, indeed,' remarked Kate, 'that you are one of the selfish people of the world ; but you must rouse him up, Pen.'

'Yes ! I want to know, Paul, what it was that made you look so pleased the other morning when you came into the schoolroom. You never told us afterwards, and you remember Kate would not let you speak at the time.'

'Oh, that is a secret,' said Paul ; 'I shall not tell any of you what it is. You may find it out. I shall only say that my part of the work at the island house will be better done than any of yours.'

'There will be very little use in my going there to-day,' said Pen, 'for I have not yet collected my pebbles, nor made my pattern for the floor ; so I can only run about and watch the rest of you to-day.'

'And I,' remarked Cecilia, 'am not more forward with my preparations. I have not the measure of the window. I forgot to take it the other day.'

‘Then you two shall help me this afternoon,’ said Kate. ‘We will all garden, and together we shall make great progress.’

‘That is not fair,’ cried Julian; ‘you engaged to do the walk, and the borders on each side of it, and round the house; so Ciss and Pen ought not to help you in it. They will make it an excuse for your helping them in their part of the work: that is what they intend.’

‘Well,’ replied Kate, ‘we will rigidly keep to our own portions, and to-day we will work at the kitchen-garden, which was not given to any one in particular.’

‘Let us remember to take our garden tools,’ said Cecilia.

‘I will go and collect them,’ cried Pen. ‘We shall have quite a load to carry down to the boat.’

‘I have a load certainly,’ said Julian; ‘but I told Jack, the stable-boy, that he was to carry my tiles down to the boat-house, so I shall only have to put them in the boat.’

‘Shall I tell the gardener to take down all our tools, Kate?’ asked Pen.

‘I think,’ replied Kate, ‘that we should do all that we want for ourselves. You know we are to suppose ourselves shipwrecked people, who are to aid themselves. If you once begin applying for help to the servants, you will spoil all your amusement.’

‘That is quite true,’ said Cecilia. ‘Let us do

everything ourselves. Go, Pen, for the tools, and I must go for some of my stores.'

'I thought you said you had nothing ready,' said Julian, as she was leaving the room.

'Nothing for the window,' replied Cecilia; 'but there was something else trusted to my care which I must not forget.'

'In half an hour, Julian,' said Kate, 'you will find us at the boat-house.' And they all separated. Paul was first at the edge of the lake. He carried two long pieces of wood, a hammer and saw, and his pockets were stuffed as full as possible with something else. Flinging his load down on the ground, he sauntered about the little pier until he saw Kate and his sisters approaching. After them came Jack with a great basket, that he seemed scarcely able to carry. Then he saw Julian run out of the house with another basket.

'You slow people,' cried Paul, 'I have been here for an immense time. I am quite tired of waiting. What is that, Ciss?'

'Don't make any inquiries,' said Cecilia, 'until you feel the want of this little box, and then I dare say you will think it the best of all our contrivances.' Cecilia and Pen had carried between them a curious-shaped box, which, instead of having four sides like the generality of boxes, had but three. It was narrow, and about two feet long. Kate had a hoe, a small spade, and a little basket, containing two or three knives, a ball of string,



and similar articles. Paul having peeped into this basket, wished to open Cecilia's box, but it was locked.

'Why have you not begun to pack yourselves and your goods into the boat?' cried Julian, arriving breathless at the boat-house door.

'Because it would have been very awkward to get these long pieces of wood through that little hole.'

'Then why did you not get the boat out?' retorted Julian.

'You forget,' said Kate, 'that you have the key in your pocket.'

'Ah! so I have indeed.' And Julian, disappearing through the little door, soon pushed the boat out, and round to the pier. Paul lifted in his wood and his tools, and disposed them to the best advantage in the bottom of the boat.

'Come, Jack,' cried Julian to the boy, who had seated himself on the grass beside his heavy basket; 'bring that basket here.' And with some difficulty they dragged it over the side of the boat.

'Are neither of you going to show a little politeness to us,' said Kate, 'in helping with our burdens?'

'Why, you know the last time we came down, cousin Kate,' said Julian, 'you said you could get in as well by yourselves.'

'So I did, but still I wish you to offer your assistance in a pleasant manner; here, place these tools nicely, and my basket. Now, Cecilia, give

him your box ; it is too heavy for you to carry across in your arms.'

'Well, this is a queer contrivance indeed,' said Julian, as he and Paul took the triangular box into the boat.

'You are to ask no questions, you know,' said Cecilia ; 'you will see the inside of it in time.'

'Is that all?' asked Julian ; 'have you nothing, Pen?'

'No, I shall bring my supply to-morrow ; and I will take a good share of the rowing, as I shall not have much work to-day at the island.'

'Let me advise you, Julian,' said Kate, as he pulled slowly away from the pier, 'not to over-tire yourself with this heavy boat ; you see there is a great deal more in it than the last time we came : content yourself with one oar, and let us in turn take the other.'

'Very well ; come, Paul, take this oar, and Cecilia will steer.' Paul, a little unwillingly, left his seat at the stern, where he was pursuing his favourite amusement of dipping his arms into the water. He was not much of an adept at rowing, and Julian's stronger pull kept turning the boat so much, that Cecilia had enough to do to steer straight across the lake. As soon as they reached the canal, Kate and Pen took the oars.

'Dear me,' exclaimed Pen, 'how very much heavier we are ! What is in that huge basket of yours, Julian?'

‘Cannot you see that they are tiles?’ replied Julian; ‘and here I have pegs and hammer in the small basket. But oh, Kate!’ he exclaimed suddenly, with a face of dismay; ‘I have forgotten a very important thing; I have a great mind to go back by myself when you are all landed.’

‘Pray do not,’ said Kate; ‘I dare say you will find something that you can work at to-day. What is your important omission? I see you have tiles, pegs, hammer, nails, and a bundle of small sticks too. I cannot divine what else you require, for the rafters, or whatever you may call the sloping pieces of wood, from the wall to the point of the roof, are quite perfect, and you have only to fix the tiles to your little cross-pieces.’

‘You will see,’ said Julian, ‘that I shall be terribly hindered, but I won’t tell you by what. Here we are!’ And jumping out, he fastened the boat to the large stone, and they began their unloading. Paul took out his long posts and his tools, and paying no attention to any one else, he walked off to the summer-house. Julian, remembering Kate’s hint at the boat-house, first handed out Cecilia’s mysterious box, and then Kate’s garden tools.

‘There is that lazy Paul,’ he cried, ‘leaving me to drag up this great basket of tiles all by myself.’

‘Do not you remember,’ said Pen, ‘that we were not to help each other? You were very much afraid that Kate would help us.’

‘I think,’ remarked Kate, ‘that we must modify

that law a little, otherwise our different works will often come to a stand-still. If we were really shipwrecked people, we should need each other's help very much; so I propose that we shall help Julian to carry those tiles to the summer-house. I will lift it by the handle on this side, Julian, whilst you carry the other, and Pen will take my tools.'

'Then,' added Cecilia, 'I will carry your small basket, Kate, and Julian's small basket; and Pen and I will run back for my box.'

'Now, Master Julian,' said Pen, as they went forward with their loads, 'you will please to make no objections if Kate gives me or Cecilia a little bit of help now and then, for we have helped you.'

'All right, Miss Pen,' replied Julian; 'I will answer for it, you will apply pretty frequently for that little bit of help.'

'Do you know,' resumed Pen, 'that Cecilia has guessed what it is that you have forgotten; and I have thought of something that will do for a substitute, but as you are saucy I will not tell it to you.'

'What is it, Cecilia?' asked Kate; 'I confess I do not perceive what more is needed.'

'He has his tiles and his tools,' replied Cecilia; 'but how is he to reach the roof?'

'Well done, Ciss!' cried Julian; 'I did not believe you would have had wits enough to think of that.'

'It is, then, a ladder,' said Kate.

'Yes, of course,' returned Julian; 'certainly I

can climb up on the roof and work a little ; but it will be very awkward, and there is a beautiful little light ladder in the stable, which would have been the very thing. I am so provoked.'

'I am delighted,' said Pen ; 'because you will not get on with your part of the house faster than I and Cecilia. I think you had better let your roof alone to-day, and work at the kitchen-garden with us.'

'Right, Pen !' said Kate ; 'I think so too ; but I should like to hear your substitute for a ladder.'

'Oh !' cried Pen ; 'it was not very good, but still if we had been in a violent hurry about the roof, it might have done better than nothing. It was to set up Cecilia's long box on one end, and the large tile basket upon that, with Julian's small basket turned upside down inside the large one, for him to stand upon.'

'A nice rickety concern, Pen,' said Julian, laughing ; 'we should all have come down together.'

'Still,' said Kate, 'it shows Pen's inventive genius ; there is no more useful quality than that of being able to think of contrivances and find substitutes—especially for shipwrecked mariners !'

'Well, Kate,' said Cecilia, 'shall we not set to work ? If you will decide where we shall begin our kitchen-garden, I will just arrange something inside the hut, and follow you.'

'That is a very ugly name for our island house,'

said Pen, as they left Cecilia and went towards the other end of the island: 'sometimes we call it our hut, sometimes our summer-house; do let us have a nice name for it, Kate: what can it be?'

'Cannot you suggest one, Pen?' replied Kate; 'I look upon you as the most imaginative of the whole party. What do you think of "The Retreat?"'

'No,' said Julian; 'that is too sentimental. Indians always call their huts or cabins, "Lodges;" we will call this our "Lodge."'

'Yes, that will do nicely,' cried Pen. 'Now, what are we to do first, Kate?'

'We must clear the ground, must we not, Julian? And that will be no small labour; you see it is half grass and half weed: we had better shave this rough sort of sod, as if we were taking up sods, and then we may be able to dig the ground underneath.'

'And what shall we do with the sods, or lumps of rubbish?' asked Pen.

'We can throw them into the water,' Julian suggested.

'That will not do, I fear,' Kate replied. 'Your papa would not like us to spoil the clear water by throwing in rubbish. We might make a little bank somewhere, which we could afterwards plant with evergreens, or something that will creep all over it.'

'Yes, very nice, cousin Kate,' cried Pen. 'We will divide our kitchen-garden from our Lodge and

flower-garden by a bank. Let us begin. What are you doing, Kate?’

‘I am cutting the sod in small pieces or squares, that it may come up more easily when we slip the spade horizontally underneath. But do you perceive that we have had the wisdom to bring only one spade? You might take my knife, Julian, and cut away some of the longer grass and weeds, so that I can cut my sods more easily. And you, Pen, as I cut them, lay them nicely together, so that we can remove them easily.’

‘I had better fetch the large basket to carry them in. Julian, may I turn out your tiles in a heap close by the Lodge?’

‘Yes, you may,’ replied Julian, who was reaping away at the long grass with much energy; ‘if you will turn them out carefully, so as not to break or crack them.’ And away ran Pen; soon she returned with the basket, and Cecilia; and when Kate had cut a few sods, they placed them flatly in the basket.

‘What is become of Paul all this time?’ asked Kate. ‘I have neither seen nor heard him since we landed.’

‘I heard him,’ said Cecilia. ‘He is sawing behind the hut.’

‘The Lodge! the Lodge, Cecilia!’ exclaimed Pen. ‘It is no longer to be all sorts of insignificant names, pray, remember! Oh! here comes Paul. What have you been doing?’

'I have been working very hard,' he answered; 'and I am so hot and so thirsty.'

'So am I,' said Julian. 'This gardening is much harder work than carpentering, for we are out in the sun, and you have been in the shade.'

'Would you like some raspberry vinegar,' asked Cecilia, 'or some ginger-beer?'

'That is malicious of you, Ciss,' said Julian, wiping his forehead. 'You just mention things that we cannot possibly get; and the lake water is so flat, and nasty to drink.'

'But suppose I offer you in reality a glass of ginger-beer?' resumed Cecilia.

'Why, I should say that you are a capital good girl.'

'Well, then, for once you shall speak well of me,' she said. 'Please to follow me into the Lodge.'

'I half believe you are making game of me,' said Julian. 'What does she mean, Kate?'

'Cecilia has not trusted me with her secret this time,' said Kate; 'but I begin to have some notions respecting that triangular box. Let us go by all means.'



## CHAPTER VI.

Cecilia proves a good Housekeeper—Paul and the Door—The Visit to the Chalk-pit—The Bats—Pleasant Chat—Singing—Paul's Fondness for Music.

So they followed Cecilia, and saw fixed up in one corner of the rough wall the triangular box, which they now recognised as a tiny corner cupboard, that used to be fixed in the store-room, and which had been devoted to pine-apple jelly, preserved ginger, and to similar dainty jams and sweetmeats.

‘You have actually coaxed Mrs Bakewell out of her pet cupboard,’ said Kate, laughing. ‘How did you manage it, Cecilia; and how did you contrive to fix it up so firmly?’

‘I drew a moving picture of our hunger when we are working here,’ said Cecilia; ‘and Mrs Bakewell said she would give me every day a basket of provisions to bring down. But then I explained that, unless under lock and key, Paul would be sure to eat them all before the right time; and, besides, that we could not carry a basket up and down every day, having so many things to bring. So at last she took down the little cupboard for me; and I hammered in, between the stones, two sticks, which you see support it, and a great nail through this little

ring at the top. Cecilia then unlocked the cupboard, and taking out a glass and a bottle of ginger-beer, handed them to Julian, with a cork-screw.

‘It was lucky you thought of that little article,’ said he, as he drew the cork; ‘this will do for two of us. Kate, may I pour you out some?’

‘Thank you, Julian; you are really becoming polite. I shall not scruple to drink it, as I feel sure our good housekeeper counted our number, and provided accordingly.’

‘Now Paul,’ asked Cecilia, ‘what for you?’

‘You said something about raspberry vinegar. I should like that, if you really have it.’

‘And I, too,’ said Pen, ‘should like raspberry vinegar.’

‘Here then;’ and Cecilia took out a thick, short bottle, and gave them each a draught.

‘Now we can go to our work again,’ said Kate. ‘Take a little yourself, Mrs Housekeeper.’

‘But is there nothing to eat?’ asked Paul.

‘Oh, that need not come yet,’ replied Cecilia, laughing. ‘You have not worked enough to be very hungry already.’

‘Indeed, I have worked a great deal, I think,’ rejoined Paul. ‘Look at my doorpost; none of you noticed it as you came in.’

‘You have actually fixed up one of your posts, have you?’ said Julian. ‘Let us see if it is firm.’ And he gave the post a good shaking.

‘Gently,’ said Kate; ‘there is no occasion to

try his work so severely. I think, Paul, it looks very upright, and very nice.'

'But, cousin Kate,' said Paul, 'you do not know all the trouble I had with it. First I sawed it just long enough to reach up to the top of the doorway, and then I saw that the cross bit of wood at the top must lay upon the posts: so I had to saw off another bit; and then—'

'And then you bored some holes with a gimlet, and nailed it with some large nails—that is all,' said Julian.

'No! but it was not all. There was nothing for the nails to stick into, between these loose stones; so I had to ram in pieces of wood here and there for the nails to hold to.'

'I understand,' said Kate; 'and I think you have managed it very well. Now we must return to our garden. Are you thinking of putting up your other post, Paul; or will you come to help at the clearance?'

'I have had enough carpentering for to-day,' replied Paul. 'I will come with you; but I know nothing at all of gardening.'

'Then begin to learn it. Desert islanders must become gardeners.'

'We must really,' cried Pen, 'have more spades. See how idle we all are, whilst Kate digs up her sods; she is, in fact, the only one who is doing much.'

'Speak for yourself, Miss Pen,' returned Julian. 'Look at the great heap of long grass and tangled

weeds that I have cut down with this awkward little knife. What shall I do with it, Kate? We cannot put these weeds into our bank.'

'No; I believe the best plan will be to burn them.'

'Oh, I will make a bonfire!' shouted Paul. 'Help me, Pen, to pile up the weeds, and then to look for some dry sticks to set fire to first.'

'Dry sticks indeed! I do not think we shall find any sticks at all here. Perhaps a few among these low bushes.' And she searched in the neighbourhood of the duck-house, while Paul made his pile to his own satisfaction.

'Here is famous wood,' cried Pen. 'Here are some very old broken boxes, or wooden places for nests, in the duck-house. I dare say we may take them. What do you think, Kate?'

'If they are old and broken, doubtless you may pull them to pieces,' returned Kate. 'Probably we shall not require them for anything else.' So, after a great deal of crashing and noise, Pen reappeared from inside the duck-house, her arms full of bits of wood, and her frock covered with dust and cobwebs.

'Really,' said Julian, laughing, 'you are a capital girl, Pen. If you were not a girl, I should think you a capital boy.'

'Then why not value her equally as a girl, Julian? You are beginning, I see, to find that sisters are, in fact, almost as good as brothers.'

‘No,’ replied Julian, ‘I don’t say so. Cecilia and Pen are up to more than I thought ; but, cousin Kate, I assure you they behave much less foolishly now that you are here, than they did the last holidays. Cecilia was either sulking or crying, and Pen was perpetually quarrelling with either me or Paul.’

‘Cannot you put it in this light also, that you and Paul were perpetually quarrelling with Pen, and that you plagued and teased Cecilia beyond the endurance of the best of tempers? Come, come, I believe there were faults on both sides, and I want to make you better acquainted with each other.’

‘How odd that sounds!’ said Cecilia; ‘better acquainted with one’s own brothers and sisters!’

‘It does sound odd, I confess,’ returned Kate; ‘but truly I think that it is frequently the case that people in the same family do not half appreciate each other, just as it is with you. Neither of you know half the good qualities of the other.’

‘Well, cousin Kate,’ said Cecilia, ‘there is both a boy and a girl working at that bonfire, so it ought to be a famous one. But do you know—’ And she whispered something to Kate, who smiled, and said that she thought it very likely.

‘Now then, Paul,’ cried Julian, ‘here are we hard-workers hoping to see a fine blaze to cheer us up. Why don’t you light your fire? you have been a long time arranging it.’ Paul stood motion-

less for a moment, and then thrusting his hands into his pockets, he sauntered away towards the 'Lodge.'

'Why, Pen,' cried Julian again, 'what is the matter with Paul, and why won't your fire burn?' Pen ran towards them laughing and clapping her hands, as she generally did when either of her brothers were discomfited.

'Oh! how ridiculous!' she exclaimed; 'I know what it is, though Paul would not say a word, when I kept on, "Light it, Paul; light it, it is all ready." Do you guess, Cis?'

'Yes,' said Cecilia, 'I told Kate that I believed you had no matches.'

'That is it,' said Pen, laughing again; 'and the silly boy taking such trouble to build up the heap, and place it all properly for the air to find room. Oh, what wretchedly bad Robinson Crusoes we are! First Julian forgets his ladder, we only bring one spade for four people, and actually are unprovided even with a match!' And she clapped her hands again.

'I confess,' said Kate, smiling, 'that our implements and our preparations to-day have not been quite successful, but we shall do better in a little while. Let us think, now, what we must bring with us to-morrow.'

'I want nothing but a ladder,' said Julian; 'what do you want, Cis?'

'I shall bring a little window-frame, and some

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small stones, and some mortar. I know exactly what I want.'

'I,' said Kate, 'have already all my gardening tools; and as I shall be the only gardener to-morrow, I shall do very well.'

'And I,' cried Pen, 'shall bring a basketful of pebbles, and some mortar, with a little trowel.'

'Here! Mr Bonfire,' shouted Julian to Paul, who had seated himself in the boat, and was comforting himself by dipping his arms in the water, 'do you know what you want for to-morrow?'

'I have got all I want,' said Paul, 'but I can't work any more to-day. I'm tired.'

'Why do not you say, "I want some matches?"' asked Pen. 'Then I will want them, and the bonfire will be mine. Come, Kate, shall we start for home?'

'Yes,' said Julian, 'let us take it easily, for I believe I shall never be cool again. I declare that greedy Cis has been helping herself to something good out of her corner cupboard, and never asked any of us to partake!' Cecilia smiled as she heard those words, and held out to Julian a pear and a biscuit.

'That is a juicy pear, Julian,' she said; 'it will cool you; and here is one for each.'

'He called you greedy, Cis,' cried Pen, who was seated in the boat with her oar in her hand; 'I would not give it him.'

'Yes,' said Cecilia, 'I heard him, but I shall

give it him, in hopes that he will not call me "greedy Cis" again. Now, Paul, shall I take that place whilst you row?" Paul had seated himself in the stern, where he was comfortably munching his pear.

'Dear me,' he said, 'am I to row? And I have already worked so hard to-day.'

'Come,' cried Pen, 'we shall go on turning round and round if nobody will take the other oar.' And Paul lazily got up and went across to the bench behind Pen, but between them they did not make very good progress. Paul pulled strongly, but unevenly; and Pen being accustomed to Kate's steady movement, was quite put out, and the boat went about from side to side of the little canal in the most unsteady fashion.

'Did you ever see such rowing?' cried Julian; 'confess that it is girls' work, Kate.'

'No, I do not at all confess it,' replied Kate. 'I think that Pen, for her size and strength, rows quite as well as Paul; but the two are so uneven in their method, that they do not go well together. However, here we are in the lake. Shall I take one of the oars with you, Julian?—though you do not deserve help, after your remark about girls' work.'

'Pray recollect, Kate,' said Julian as they rowed, 'that I never include you when I say girls are stupid, and slow, and weak, and so on. I only mean Cecilia and Pen. You are a grown-up young lady, and quite beyond my remarks.'



‘Oh, but I do take your remarks to myself, Julian. I entirely place myself on a level with Cecilia and Pen; and I am not so very much older, that criticisms applied to them will not suit me.’ Julian pulled his oar in silence for some time, and Pen took advantage of his silence to talk.

‘Cousin Kate,’ she said, ‘I am quite puzzled how to manage about my pebbles. You say that we must not neglect our lessons and music in the morning, so I cannot go then to the quarry for my pebbles. Then in the afternoon we come to the island, and by the time we get back it is too late, and I am too tired to go. So how am I to get my pebbles?’

‘Well, Pen, let us think. I believe you will have to give up one afternoon at the island, unless you like to go this evening after dinner. There will be quite light enough.’

‘I do not like to give up coming to the island,’ Pen replied. ‘If some one will go with me, I will collect my pebbles this evening.’

‘What say you, Paul?’ asked Kate. ‘Who do you think had better go with Pen this evening?’

‘Oh, I don’t know,’ said Paul; ‘I don’t care who goes. If you mean that I ought to go, I do not wish.’

‘Have you anything particular to do at home this evening?’ asked Kate.

‘No, I shall read. I have not anything else to do.’

‘Then why do you not try to make yourself

useful and pleasant to your sister, and offer to go with her and help her?"

'I do not know, cousin Kate; it is tiresome, and I don't want to go.'

'Cecilia will go, I know,' said Pen.

'Yes, Cecilia is always your resource, I know,' said Kate. 'She is always ready to help you or any one; but I wish to persuade your brothers to be willing to do the same. You are stronger and more able to do everything, Julian and Paul, according to your own account, and therefore you should be our constant helpers. Is not this a natural conclusion to make, Julian?'

'I believe I am more able, certainly,' said Julian; 'but still I should not like to be called upon to help my sisters in everything.'

'Will you help me out of the boat, at least,' said Kate, as they touched the little pier. Julian gave her his hand to steady her as she stepped out, and, rather to her amusement, extended the same polite attention to his sisters. The whole party were tired, and they went slowly and silently up the park.

'Shall we arrange some more eggs this evening?' said Kate, as they sat at dinner.

'I did intend to have done so,' Julian replied; 'but I think I shall change my mind and go with Pen to the quarry.' Pen clapped her hands with delight.

'That is famous!' she exclaimed. 'Really, Kate,



with your persuasions and lectures, they will end by being the most kind and useful of brothers.'

'I won't go, Miss Pen, if you are saucy,' said Julian; 'and pray what are we to bring back these wondrous pebbles in? In my pockets, I suppose!'

'Not at all,' said Pen with dignity, 'I never thought of your going with me, so I must have taken something to carry them; and I mean to take a large flat basket that will hold a great many, and which we can carry by the two handles when it is full. Will you come now, Julian? May we, Kate?'

'Certainly; I wish you success in your search, Pen: as for me, I am quite tired, and shall lie on the sofa and read until you return.' Paul settled himself on another sofa also, with a book; and Cecilia stood looking out of the window rather undecidedly.

'Pray, Cecilia,' said Kate, 'sing to me a little; you have not once sung in the evening since your brothers came home.'

'No,' replied Cecilia, 'I know that Julian would laugh at my singing, or make quizzing remarks about it, and I should not like to sing before him.'

'Then to-night let me hear a little, as he is not here; as for Paul, I shall not allow him to speak at all, unless he wishes to admire.' So Cecilia went to the piano and began to sing. She had not much compass of voice, but sang simple songs with some taste and expression, and the tone was very sweet

and pleasing. Kate had given her some rather old-fashioned songs, which she preferred to the modern English ballads; and Cecilia sang, 'Blow, blow, thou winter wind,' and then, 'Where the bee sucks.' Kate was much amused by watching Paul; when Cecilia began, he sat up and stared, and deliberately laid down his book. When Cecilia had finished her second song, he went and stood near her, and exclaimed, 'I like that, I like it very much; sing it again, Ciss, will you?' Cecilia looked at Kate with a smile of pleasure.

'I have really found a way of pleasing Paul, cousin Kate, do you see?'

'Yes,' replied Kate, 'I have been watching him; pray sing again for him.' And Cecilia sang her song again, Paul standing by her side, intently listening, with his eyes fixed on her face.

Whilst the party at home were thus occupied, Julian and Pen pursued their way to the gravel-pit, Pen carrying a large flat basket or pannier of plaited straw.

'Cannot we find what you want in this chalk-pit?' asked Julian, as they passed along the edge of an old disused quarry or pit.

'No, I can't,' replied Pen; 'there are no pebbles there, but flints, all white outside, and generally they are too large for what I want. There is only one small gravel-pit here, and I must have some red and some grey stones, which I believe I shall find there.'

‘Then let us make haste,’ said Julian, ‘and we will then return by the chalk-pit. I want to see if any owls are building there.’ So they hurried on to the gravel-pit, and were soon very busy collecting the roundest pebbles. Julian worked away in good earnest, and they soon had half a basketful, and Pen thought she should not manage to pave her floor with more than that quantity in one afternoon.

‘Now for the chalk-pit!’ cried she, seizing one handle of the heavy pannier. Julian took the other, and they came along the road and turned down a steep lane which led to the entrance of the chalk-pit. There were several of these in the neighbourhood: the one into which they were now descending was of great extent; the public road passed along one edge, and the cliff of chalk had been cut down perpendicularly to such a depth, that it appeared quite dangerous to approach the brink. Another side of the same pit was fringed at the top with a thick wood, and the lower branches hung down over the edge, the bright foliage making a lovely contrast with the chalk-cliff, now weather-stained and aged into a sort of pearly grey. Weeds and wild flowers grew in the crannies and clefts that wind and rain had beaten in the formerly smooth face of the chalk, and innumerable birds built in holes pecked in the soft cliff by their own persevering little beaks. The opposite side to these two cliffs was not so abrupt, low hillocks covered

with underwood affording an easy access on that side, and the space within the cliffs was now converted into garden-ground. But delightful as this place always had appeared to the children, Pen and Julian did not remain here; they merely passed along the cart-road that led across the gardens, and then entered a small tunnel cut through the steepest and highest cliff. The road, after passing for some two hundred yards in almost darkness, emerged in another chalk-pit—the one which Julian had wished to visit. It had no entrance or exit excepting the tunnel from the outer pit, and formed an oblong square of about a quarter of a mile long,—the perpendicular walls all round it being about 50 feet in height. The area or ground within this place was not converted to any useful purpose; rough heaps of stones, tangled weeds and grass, seemed to denote that this disused chalk-pit was entirely left to the occupation and enjoyment of hawks, owls, starlings, and a host of other birds, to say nothing of the countless bats, one of which nearly flew into Pen's outstretched arms.

'Oh, what a glorious place!' cried Julian; 'look at the owl, Pen; look!' And there he went, a large white fellow, flapping his wings in the most provoking manner, just out of their reach. Julian threw stones at it, hoping to knock it down; but it flew on unhurt until it reached its own hole, into which it very deliberately crept.

'I declare,' said Pen, 'I am glad it has reached

its home safely; why did you throw stones at it, Julian?’

‘I wanted to get it,’ he replied, ‘to knock it over. When one sees a creature like that so near, one cannot resist flinging something at it—at least I cannot.’

‘That is boy’s fashion, then,’ said Pen. ‘What would be the use of laming and injuring the poor owl? We had the pleasure of seeing it distinctly as it flew across the pit.’

‘If you begin to reason about it, perhaps you are right; but it is an irresistible impulse, if you understand what that means, to run, and rush, and throw at any live creature that comes across us.’

‘Oh, I understand very well,’ said Pen; ‘you and Paul always do so, and Cecilia and I do not. But I will tell you what I should like, Julian,—to have a ladder, or some way of reaching all these nests, and just to peep softly into them all. Just to see that owl in his snug hole, blinking and staring!’

‘There is a starling,’ cried Julian, flinging a great stone with the same bad success as before. ‘Yes, Pen, I would give a great deal to be able to reach all these nest-holes; but look here—here is an old cave or hole in the cliff: it goes back some way, and I am sure there will be bats here. Come in, Pen.’ Pen was nothing loth, and they groped their way into the dark cave, and were soon rewarded by two or three bats flapping in their faces.

Julian caught one in his hand, and another in his hat.

‘Come along, Pen,’ he said; ‘let us have a good look at them in the daylight.’

‘There is not much light now anywhere,’ Pen said; ‘I think we might as well go home now. Are you going to bring the bats, or will you let them fly here?’

‘I shall take them home, of course, if only for the pleasure of startling Ciss and cousin Kate when I let them fly in the drawing-room.’

‘You will have no such pleasure,’ replied Pen; ‘Ciss does not care in the least for any living creature; and Kate would only say, “Poor little creature, why did you bring it away from its own haunt?”’

‘Then they are not like some other girls. However, I shall try. Pick up that frog, Pen; I will take that too.’ Julian was a little surprised to see Pen carefully lift up the frog, and hold it gently between her hands.

‘What is the use of carrying it home, Julian? You can but let it hop away on the lawn, and most likely it much prefers hopping here. I will put it down in this long grass; you shall not take it.’

‘I only wanted to see whether you would touch it, Pen; I thought you would scream, and refuse. I cannot say I am very fond of handling frogs myself, so I should not have been surprised. But really, Pen, I find you a very tolerable companion,



to the full as good as Paul ; indeed better in one way, for you have some ideas of your own, and try to argue a little, which he seldom gives himself the trouble to do. Well, as we cannot reach any of the nests, we may as well go home. Do you know whether mama has an owl's egg ?'

'Yes,' said Pen, 'I know she has. Cecilia bought one from the gardener's boy for her ; and he said he found the nest in a hollow tree. You will find it in one of her drawers when we get home. Wait a bit, Julian ; here are some small flints that may be useful to me. Let us collect a few. Will you fetch the basket ?' They had left the basket at the entrance of the tunnel.

'Oh no,' said Julian ; 'it is not worth while to drag the basket in here ; I will take a few in my pocket.' Quantities of flints are contained in the chalk cliffs. Julian took up some that Pen declared were much too large for her flooring, and they had some trouble to find them small enough. The outsides were coated with a thick dead white ; and as Julian cracked several against each other, they saw the insides, which were clear dark flint. At last Pen was tolerably satisfied with her basket, and they reached home when it was nearly dark.

'We have had such a pleasant evening !' cried Pen, as they entered the drawing-room ; 'it is so nice in the chalk-pits. We saw an owl and other birds, and caught—' Here Julian let out the prisoners that he had brought home in his hat,

and the dusky little creatures fluttered about, as if doubtful where to go for concealment.

‘Bats, I declare!’ shouted Paul; ‘where did you get them?’ And he darted upon one that had fallen wearied on the floor.

‘Show it me, Paul,’ said Cecilia; ‘I have scarcely ever seen one so close. How wonderfully soft it is, and what a curiously-formed little animal!’

‘Yes,’ said Kate; ‘it appears to be the connecting link between the animal and the bird creation. The wings are very perfect, and yet it is more like a mouse than a bird—in fact, a flying mouse.’

‘It is very strange,’ returned Cecilia; ‘and you know a seal is half a fish and half a dog; so it connects beasts and fishes.’

‘There is another creature,’ said Kate, ‘that is half fish and half quadruped. Do you know what it is, Paul?’

‘No, I did not know that a seal was so; all I knew about it was that its skin is very pretty. A boy at school had a seal-skin cap.’

‘Then I must show you a picture of a seal, that you may know in future a little about it.’ And she brought a book from the table. ‘Look, Paul,’ she continued, ‘here is a seal. You see its head is very much like a dog’s, and it has two paws in front, but then no hinder legs, but a tail and body the same as a fish. So that it really combines the two creations.’

‘And do you mean the “walrus” for the other you mentioned, cousin Kate?’ said Julian.

‘Yes ; I dare say there is a picture of it here,’ she replied, turning over the leaves. ‘Yes, here it is. It is also called sea-cow and sea-horse ; but I think it is also more like a very large dog, with the exception of its long tusks. And instead of only a tail, like the seal, it has two broad flat fins, something like paws, instead of hinder-legs. So that it approaches a little nearer than the seal to the land creation.’

‘Cousin Kate,’ cried Julian, ‘I know of a creature that is half bird and half beast. Do you know it?’

‘I think I do,’ replied Kate. ‘What is it, Paul?’

‘Ask Ciss,’ said Julian.

‘It is the ornithorynchus,’ replied Cecilia ; ‘there is a picture of it too in that book. It has a duck’s bill and webbed feet, and a body like an otter.’

‘Well done, Ciss,’ cried Julian ; ‘and where does it live?’

‘In Australia. It makes its hole in the bank of a river, with an entrance underneath the water, and it lives in the water as well as out.’

‘Did you know this, Paul?’ asked Kate.

‘No, I did not ; I never heard of it. I think Ciss knows a great deal.’

‘She was quite at home about the ornithorynchus,’ said Julian. ‘Why don’t you read these natural history books, Paul ? There are several in the house.’

‘Perhaps I shall,’ answered Paul; ‘but meantime what am I to do with this bat? Shall I shut it up in one of my drawers?’

‘Oh no,’ cried Pen, ‘let it fly out of the window. Poor little thing, I dare say it will find its way back to its home in the chalk-pit.’

‘Not the least likely, I should think,’ said Julian; ‘it will stay about the house somewhere.’

‘Then it was very cruel to bring them away; there is another somewhere.’

‘Paul,’ said Cecilia, ‘if I put these bats safely somewhere till to-morrow morning, will you run with Pen to the chalk-pit and put them back?’

Paul hesitated. ‘It is not worth the trouble,’ he said. ‘Just turn them out of the window.’

‘But I sang for you this evening,’ urged Cecilia. ‘Will you not oblige me in return?’

‘If I take them to the chalk-pit in the morning,’ said Paul, ‘will you sing again to me in the evening?’ Cecilia looked doubtfully at Julian.

‘I will answer for her,’ said Kate, ‘that she will always be ready to oblige and please you; so you cannot do less than agree to what she asks.’

‘Very well, I shall go,’ said Paul; ‘but I have only one bat.’

‘I will take that now and shut it up. We shall find the other, I have no doubt.’

‘And Paul is pretending to like music,’ said Julian. ‘What does he know about music?’

‘I know nothing about it, except that I like to

hear Cecilia sing; and if she will sing songs for me, I shall do whatever she wants.' Cecilia went away with the bat, and Paul began diligently to search for the other bat.

'Julian,' said Kate, 'I wish to make you a request, and have no doubt that you will grant it. Cecilia has been singing to-night for the first time since you came home; she has not courage to do so when you are present, because she dreads your sarcasms. So I lose the pleasure of hearing music in the evening; and now, as I have engaged for her that she shall sing to Paul, I want you to promise me that you will make no remark whatever on her singing. I ask you this as a favour to myself. What say you?'

'I will say nothing about the music, cousin Kate, if you particularly desire it; but really it used to make me laugh to see Ciss seated so stiffly at the piano, and squeaking up to the high notes with such effort.'

'Well, whatever there might have been formerly, there is now no effort, and no squeaking, but very nice singing. So remember to-morrow evening that you make no remarks. What! cannot you find the miserable little bat, Paul?'

'No indeed,' he replied, creeping from under the sofa. 'I do not see it anywhere.'

'Then you had better leave it for to-night, and go to bed,' said Kate. 'I dare say it will be found in the morning.'

## CHAPTER VII.

The Morning Walk—The Chalk-pit again—More Things for the Island—Setting to Work—Julian's Confession—Plenty to do—A Suggestion—Early Rising.

PAUL did not forget his engagement in return for the music. Very early he knocked at the door of his sister's room.

'Come, Pen,' he said, 'I have found the other bat; it was huddled up just beneath the window-curtain. Give me the one that Ciss put away, and let us go.' Pen soon joined him, bringing the bat in a little basket, and they took their way to the chalk-pit.

'I suppose,' said Kate, as she sat down to breakfast with Cecilia and Julian, 'that Paul thought of his promised songs, and has gone out to the chalk-pit, for I have not seen Pen this morning. Oh, here they come!'

'Such a lovely morning!' cried Pen breathlessly, seating herself. 'We are late, and I have missed my music lesson, but we really could not help loitering about. The chalk-pit looks nicer, Julian, by the morning light than it does in the dusk, so fresh and cool, for the sun had not shone much into it, and such a twittering of birds.'

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‘Now, Miss Chatterbox, cannot you let Paul speak a little? You have not allowed him time even to say good morning.’

‘I have nothing particular to say,’ returned Paul. ‘I don’t know how Pen always finds so much to talk about.’

‘But try, Paul, to tell us something. It appears so dull and indifferent, to have no remark whatever to make.’

‘Well, we put the bats into the cave that Pen said they came out of, and they seemed to care very little whether they went home or not. They never tried to fly, and we put them into some crannies in the side of the cave.’

‘Then you have fairly earned your music for this evening.’

‘And having heard all that Paul has to say,’ said Julian, ‘I shall go and see about my ladder.’

‘Oh, Julian,’ cried Pen, ‘I want a great deal of mortar. I wish you would get it for me; that would not be actually helping me in my work.’

‘Instead of going to the chalk-pit this morning, you might have seen about your mortar,’ said Julian. ‘I collected half your pebbles last night; and now, little idle thing, I am to fetch your mortar! Is there nothing to be done for you too, Ciss?’ Cecilia looked surprised.

‘No, thank you, Julian,’ she said. ‘I will not trouble you to do anything for me.’ And Julian went out.

‘I am sorry,’ said Kate, ‘that you did not think of something that he could do for you. I like to take him at his word on such occasions.’

‘Oh! but, cousin Kate,’ said Cecilia, ‘I do not think he meant that he would do anything for me. He only said that, to show that he finds us troublesome.’

‘No, Cecilia. Why will you not believe that he wishes to be obliging? He certainly was good-natured to Pen last night, and he will obtain the mortar for her this morning; but you give him so little encouragement to be companionable with you.’

‘Indeed,’ said Pen, ‘he did not plague me once yesterday evening; helped me to collect and to carry my pebbles, and was quite good to me all the time we were out. Oh, he is much better. I assure you, cousin Kate, this is quite different from last holidays.’ The morning passed quietly in the school-room. Julian and Paul worked at their maps very peaceably; and at the usual time in the afternoon they took their way down to the boat, Julian carrying a tolerably long ladder. Kate objected to this.

‘I cannot,’ she said, ‘consent to your taking that heavy thing down to the lake. It is a great deal too much for you, especially in this hot weather. Pray fetch Jack, and let him carry one end.’

‘What makes you think me so weak, Kate?’ said Julian pettishly. ‘It is heavy certainly, but I am able to carry it.’

‘I do not think you weak,’ answered Kate, ‘but



the very strongest person may be overdone ; and, remember, I look to you to set a good example to Paul and Pen. If you rebel against my temporary authority, I can but expect that they will do so too.' Julian said nothing, but walked away towards the stable ; and Kate looked round to see what the others had provided themselves with.

'You need not look so inquisitively at my basket,' said Pen, 'for Paul has promised to take one handle, as he has nothing to carry for himself ; and as for my mortar, it is already at the boat-house, a little tubful. Julian sent it down this morning.'

'And you, Cecilia,' asked Kate, 'is that frame your only load ?'

'Yes, that is all,' said Cecilia, showing her a light frame of wood ; 'and I am going to use a little of Pen's mortar.'

'Then we will walk quietly down to the boat,' said Kate. Julian soon followed them, soberly carrying one end of his ladder, and Jack the other. They had some difficulty in arranging this ladder, and at first thought that it did best laid along from the stem to the stern ; but then it hindered the rowers too much, and at last they laid it across the boat, just in front of the steerer. The little tub of mortar was placed in the bottom, with the basket of pebbles, and Cecilia carefully kept her frame on her knee.

'What is that frame, Ciss ?' asked Julian, as he pulled gently across the lake.

‘It is the frame of my painted window,’ she said.

‘Yes, I suppose so,’ he returned; ‘but I want to know where you got it, for I can see that you did not make it yourself; it is not new. I want to know where it came from.’

‘Do you remember,’ said Cecilia, ‘a little closet in our room, with red silk doors?—I mean doors with the middle made of silk. Well, the two doors in the middle are much wider than this; and at each end there was a little narrow door. This is taken from one end, and the silk pulled out. At first I was going to unscrew the hinges, but then found that the whole front would come off from the cupboard; so you see I have a frame, with a little door fitting to it, and a button to shut it with.’

‘But do you think, cousin Kate,’ said Julian, ‘that mama will allow Ciss to pull the furniture to pieces in this sort of way?’

‘Indeed, I do not feel sure about it,’ said Kate.

‘Oh,’ cried Pen, ‘it is all right; do you know that mama gave us all the things in our own room,—our little tables and our shelves, and everything? She said they were to be quite our own; and as the little closet does just as well without its front, we shall not miss it.’

‘Then how are you going to fasten it into those rough stones?’

‘I shall fill up the crannies between the stones

with some of Pen's mortar ; and then I believe this frame will just squeeze into the opening.'

'But what about the glass?'

'There is a little ledge in the wood, where the silk was fastened ; and I shall fasten my panes of glass into that ledge with some putty.'

'I dare say it will do very nicely,' said Kate. 'Then you all have your own work to-day, and I shall be left to garden by myself. We shall have a proper working-day.' In due time they arrived at the island, carried up the ladder, the mortar, and the pebbles, and set earnestly to work. Paul disappeared to his saw and his post behind the 'Lodge.' Julian reared his ladder against the roof, and commenced pegging and tiling. Cecilia went in and out, plastering first inside and then outside with a little bit of flat wood. Pen spread a little piece of the floor with a thick layer of mortar, and then commenced pressing in her pebbles in a sort of zigzag pattern,—blue pebbles and red ; she reserved the white for the centre of the floor. Kate marked out borders for each side of the path from the landing-place to the Lodge, and then began to dig and clear the earth. They were all extremely busy for more than an hour, when Paul made his appearance from his primitive carpenter shop.

'Cecilia,' he said, peeping in at the door, 'is there nothing in your corner cupboard to-day? I am afraid not ; for I did not see you bring anything with you !'

‘But I have my supplies for to-day,’ said Cecilia, going to her little depository, whence she brought five little pies and her bottle of raspberry vinegar.

‘There is just enough,’ she said, ‘to give us each a mug of it, for it is already mixed with water; and there is a pie for each. Then I have one pear for each when we have finished.’

‘Your little store has done very nicely indeed, Cecilia,’ said Kate: ‘let us sit on the grass and rest for a little while, and then we will resume our work.’

‘Let us make a survey of what is done,’ exclaimed Julian, when they were rested and refreshed. ‘First look at my roof; do you see that I have gone all round it three times, and have put on three rows of tiles lapping over each other? They are all firm and strong, Kate. I have put a peg through each, and a layer of mortar where one row laps over on the row beneath; so I expect it will last a long time, and be quite weather-proof.’

‘I pronounce it very well done, Julian,’ said Kate. ‘Now let us see what you have done, Paul.’

‘I have sawn my second post for the doorway, and also the cross piece of wood for the top; now I am going to fix them up, and that is the most troublesome part of the business, because I have first to knock in pieces of wood between the stones to hold my nails.’

‘So far it is famous; is it not, Cecilia?’

‘Yes; I think Paul has managed much better

than I expected; but, Paul, you have still the worst part before you. I am sure it will be difficult to fasten the planks evenly together for the door, and then to hang it well.'

'Oh, I don't fear that,' said Paul; 'I know I can manage that part easily.' And he nodded his head in a mysterious manner.

'Paul has some secret about this wonderful door,' cried Pen. 'Never mind him, Kate, but come and look at my floor; I am making first a grey border, with zigzags of red pebbles upon it. Have I not done a large piece?'

'Yes indeed, Pen,' said Kate; 'you have been very industrious. Do you think you can manage one quarter of it to-day? I should do it by divisions of quarters or eighths, beginning at the outside, as you have done, and coming in towards the centre.'

'Yes, that will be more amusing than going all round first. I shall try your way, cousin Kate; but I think I shall not manage more than half a quarter to-day.'

'Kate's way is always the best, I think,' said Cecilia. 'Will you look at my window now?' She had placed the little frame in the rough opening left for a window, and then had filled up the gaps and openings that remained all round it with stones and mortar, so that a very tidy window now appeared, only waiting to be glazed; it opened and shut perfectly well, and fastened with a small button of wood.

‘What a famous little window, Ciss!’ cried Paul; ‘how well you have done it!’

‘Oh! but recollect it was ready-made,’ said Julian. ‘I consider that rather a shirking of work on your side, Ciss; you have, in fact, had nothing to do but to stuff it into the hole.’

‘Oh, I acknowledge,’ cried Cecilia, ‘that mine has been very easy work; and when it is finished, I will help any of you that like to make use of me.’

‘Finished! but you have still your glass to paint. However, I am off to my part of the business. Come, Pen, down to your floor again. Stop, stop, we never inspected cousin Kate’s work; come all of you, and let us see if we can find some fault with this wonderful Kate!’ And they all ran out to look at her borders.

‘Well, Cecilia,’ said Kate, ‘let me hear what you think.’

‘I think that they are very even, and very smooth and nice; but it seems to me that you have done a very little piece in all the time that we have been here.’

‘So do I,’ said Paul; ‘why, I thought you would have gone almost down to the landing-place.’

‘So you two pronounce me idle! And you, Pen?’

‘You have made the borders too far apart,’ said Pen. ‘I mean the walk is much too wide. I thought you would make it just the width of our doorway.’

‘No, Pen,’ interrupted Julian; ‘it is much better

of this width ; we can now have flowers all along, without breaking them to pieces by knocking against them. But, cousin Kate, would it not have been better to have had a path round the Lodge, and to have stopped these borders at about a yard and a half from the wall ?’

‘Perhaps your remark is just,’ replied Kate. ‘Doubtless we shall perpetually be stepping over the border, or upon it ; so I will cover up again with gravel and pebbles a piece of each border. And what shall it be edged with ?—rough stones, or box, or thrift ?’

‘With “London Pride,”’ said Cecilia ; ‘that makes, I think, the prettiest of edgings.’

‘And as for my idleness,’ said Kate, ‘I must really defend myself against that accusation. You have no idea of the difficulty of digging this rough, stony soil, full of roots and rubbish ; and I have quite cleared it, and dug it a foot in depth.’

‘Poor Kate,’ said Cecilia, smiling. ‘How wrong in us to find fault with your work ! Now, as I have nothing more to do for myself, I will come and help you, and you shall sit down there and direct me.’

‘No indeed,’ said Kate. ‘I should really then be idle. See, Julian is at the top of his ladder again, and Paul busy with his wedges, and Pen on her knees sticking in her pebbles ; let us set to work, Ciss.’ And between them they dug and cleared several yards of the marked-out border before the sun began to decline much. Then one by one they

left their different occupations, and collected round Kate.

‘Well,’ said she, ‘I suppose we are all ready to go home, and I think we have worked famously to-day : we shall soon have the Lodge in first-rate order. Is there anything to be carried back to-day?’

‘I have nothing,’ said Julian ; ‘and all that I shall want to-morrow is here. Pen has her pebbles, and mortar enough for several days, I think ; and Paul can have nothing to take home.’

‘Come, then,’ returned Kate ; ‘let us make the best of our way across the lake.’

‘We shall know the way pretty well soon, shall we not?’ said Pen. ‘I will row with Paul till we get into the lake ; and you, Julian, may finish with Kate.’

‘Do you observe,’ remarked Julian, ‘that Ciss always avoids rowing. Pen arranges that we shall do this, and that, and always takes care to leave Ciss out of the question, comfortably seated at the tiller. You need not look alarmed, Ciss ; I have no intention of routing you up and making you row ; I am too tired to take the trouble.’

‘And yet, Julian,’ said Kate, ‘we have not been exerting ourselves more than about three hours : we left the house at half-past one, and we were on the island at half-past two : it is now a quarter to six ; so that we have worked only a small part of the day. I am afraid that none of us could accomplish a whole day’s work.’



‘And we know,’ said Cecilia, ‘that our regular and proper dinner is waiting for us when we reach home; but if we had to find it and cook it for ourselves on the island, I dare say we should find it very hard work.’

‘Suppose we try remaining a whole day upon the island, going there as soon as we are up, and staying till bed-time?’

‘We had better wait till the roof is finished, and the floor made level,’ said Cecilia; ‘for if it should rain, it would not be very pleasant to have to stand or sit upon Pen’s wet mortar, with a roof full of holes.’

‘No,’ continued Julian; ‘I think we will not stay a whole day till the Lodge is finished; and we must also make some contrivance about a fire.’

‘Very well,’ said Kate. ‘Then we will work on as fast as we can till our abode is habitable, and then we will make a slight imitation of shipwrecked sailors, always making good use of the larder at home.’

‘It will be indeed but a slight imitation,’ said Pen, laughing. ‘But, cousin Kate, as long as we know that we have the house to resort to for what we want, we shall never thoroughly be Robinson Crusoes.’

‘You are right, Pen,’ replied her cousin; ‘necessity brings out numerous capacities and qualities that we are not aware of. And even of this play-work I confess that I have had enough to-day.’

Come, Julian, I always now expect your hand to help me out of the boat.' When they were assembled in the drawing-room after dinner, Paul fidgeted about, went and sat on the music-stool, twisting it round and round; then took a book, and laid himself full-length on the carpet, resting his elbows on the floor, with his book between them; then he got up again, and leant over Julian, who had found a portfolio of his mother's, and was closely examining sketch after sketch.

'Don't lean upon me, Paul,' said he. 'How you fidget about! Get away, can't you?'

'You are indeed rather restless, Paul,' said Kate, who was reading on the sofa.

'How I do hate work!' said Paul; 'I mean needlework. Are you going to do that sewing all the evening, Ciss?'

'No, not all the evening,' she replied. 'Why do you ask? how does my needlework annoy you?'

'Don't you remember why I went to the chalk-pit this morning?' Pen laughed.

'Ah, I knew what Paul was thinking about,' she cried; 'and I wondered whether he would speak.'

'Well, he has not spoken outright,' said Cecilia; 'but I do not forget my promise, Paul; and I will sing for you in a few minutes.' Paul waited patiently, and presently Cecilia opened the piano, and rather nervously began a song; but finding that Julian said nothing, and seemed completely absorbed in his portfolio, she became more courageous,

and ended the pretty German song with much spirit.

‘Do you like that, Paul?’ she said, when it was ended.

‘Yes, I like it; but I like those you sang yesterday better. Will you sing them again?’

‘I dare say,’ said Kate, ‘he would like “Pestal.” Try it.’ Cecilia sang it, and then several others; Paul sitting close by her, and taking the most intense interest in the music. At last Cecilia shut the piano, and said she was tired, and would go to bed.

‘So will I,’ cried Pen, putting away her work. ‘How I do like listening to singing! I shall begin soon to sing myself.’

‘Well, I like it too,’ said Julian, rising and closing his portfolio. ‘I like to look at pretty drawings, and to listen to songs at the same time.’

‘Is it possible, Julian,’ remarked Kate, ‘that you find pleasure in examining a lady’s drawings, and in listening to a girl’s singing?’

‘Oh, the drawings are mama’s; and I never thought lightly of anything that she does.’

‘But if I mistake not,’ said Kate, ‘you did think very lightly of all that Cecilia did; and I am very glad to hear that you feel a pleasure in listening to her singing. That is something gained; and if you would but understand it, she has really merited approval this evening by more than her singing.’

‘Now, cousin Kate, what do you mean by understanding it?’

‘I mean that Cecilia feels so nervous and so fearful of your sarcasms and quizzing, that it was a very great effort to her to venture to sing at all ; and I think you scarcely understand that sort of feeling enough to appreciate Cecilia’s courage this evening.’

‘But I assure you, Kate,’ said Julian eagerly, ‘I have let Cecilia alone wonderfully since I came home. I suppose it is because you are here to talk to, and because you always interfere if I begin to tease. Last holidays I know I did tease and laugh at her a great deal ; but now I do not think she has any reason to be shy and nervous before me.’

‘No, perhaps not,’ returned Kate ; ‘but when once distrust and shyness are awakened, it is the most difficult thing in the world to shake them off again ; and she is still feeling the effects of your conduct during the last holidays.’

‘Indeed, cousin Kate,’ said Julian, ‘Ciss rather brought it on herself then ; for she really was often so pettish and touchy, that she would not bear the least remark ; even papa noticed it, and mama too, though she was so ill.’

‘Cecilia told me so herself,’ said Kate ; ‘but even that irritability of temper was caused by a good feeling—by her great anxiety about your mama : for I believe Cecilia was the first to perceive how very serious her illness was becoming ; and between her fear of alarming the invalid, and her intense eagerness to make your father believe

how ill she was, poor Cecilia went through much worry of mind.'

'Was that during our holidays?' asked Julian.

'Yes; and you, instead of helping and counselling your sister at so trying a time, increased the weight upon her spirits by unkind tormenting.'

'If I had known in the least what was going on,' said Julian, 'I really would not have done so.'

'Why should you not have known?' asked Kate. 'You had but to notice, and think of others, and you would have seen all that Cecilia saw. I see no excuse for you, Julian; and it seems to me that children do not half early enough begin to be thoughtful for others—they think too exclusively of themselves.'

'Perhaps that is true, cousin Kate; I don't often think of what other people like or wish.'

'That is evident, Julian. Try to be less selfish, and try to gain the confidence and affection of Cecilia. You do not think it worth gaining? Well, time will show. Good night, Julian.'

The next day passed much in the same manner. Their lessons now went on quietly and regularly; and after luncheon they were eager to start for the island. Julian worked steadily at his roof; Paul fixed in his posts more firmly with long nails, and rammed down a smooth hard sort of step or threshold; Pen stuck in her pebbles, and finished the first quarter of the floor. Cecilia alone had none of her own work to do, as she had not yet

prepared the glass for the little window. So she and Kate did a good day's work at the garden, smoothed the path down to the landing-place, finished off the two borders with a round end, and then went again to the kitchen-garden, and dug there for a time. Then Paul came and petitioned for something out of the corner cupboard.

'I know,' he said, 'that you have something there to-day, because you brought a basket with you; and I am so dreadfully hungry, and so dreadfully hot and thirsty.'

'Well,' said Cecilia, 'I can supply you with something to eat and drink. Will you have a little meat-pie or a tartlet?'

'Oh, the tartlet, certainly,' said Paul, 'and some raspberry vinegar.'

'I have not any to-day, but here is ginger-beer for you. Now take these out to the others, greedy boy.' And Paul, with his mouth full, took their little portions out to Kate and Julian.

'Here, Pen,' said Cecilia, 'rest for a little while, and come and sit on the bank with us all whilst you eat your pie.'

'Don't you think,' remarked Pen, when she had refreshed herself a little, 'that we ought to take a ride, or a long walk, or do something else to-morrow afternoon? You know, Kate, that you said it was better not to have too much of the same thing.'

Julian clapped his hands. 'Ah, Miss Pen,' he exclaimed, 'you are beginning to be tired of your

fine floor. I thought how it would be ; girls never have any perseverance. As for Cecilia, she is not attempting to get forward with her window. Paul and I, you see, stick to our engagement, without making any excuses to leave work.'

'And I expect that my door will be finished to-morrow,' said Paul ; 'so I shall have worked the best of you all.'

'You mistake,' replied Julian ; 'you cannot make your door, fix the hinges, and lock and hang it up in one afternoon. It will take you three or four days, I am certain. Most likely the roof will be finished first.'

'I am rather puzzled how to go on with mine, cousin Kate,' said Cecilia, 'because I cannot paint my glass here. I should have to bring a table, and chair, and paint-box, and all sorts of things, and, after all, not be able to do it as well as I should at home. So I never have any time for it.'

'Why can't you do it before breakfast?' suggested Paul.

'Because I have my music to do then,' answered Cecilia ; 'and after dinner we must sit in the drawing-room, where I may not take paints. So the only plan, Kate, is for me to stay at home one afternoon ; and if you ride to-morrow or next day, I will, instead of riding, do my glass in the school-room.'

'I think that will be a good plan,' replied Kate. 'Then shall we decide to ride to-morrow, Julian ?'

‘Yes,’ he said; ‘as I did not propose it, and so cannot be accused of avoiding my work, I am quite willing to profit by little idle Pen’s idea. Let us take a good long ride somewhere. Really I have neglected my poor pony most terribly. Indeed, I am puzzled, as Ciss says, about a variety of things. I seem to have so little leisure now. Lessons all the morning, island all the afternoon. I have never practised leaping at the bars in the paddock; I have never learnt to swim in the lake, though Davis, the gardener, promised to teach me these holidays. I have never been over to Lee, to visit James Gordon, as I intended; in short, I have not a moment of time.’

‘How different it is from the last holidays!’ said Pen. ‘I remember then you were always complaining that you had nothing to do, and did not know what to do with yourself. So did Paul.’

‘And now you say there is no time,’ said Kate. ‘What do you think of three good hours of bright daylight, fresh and delicious either for learning to swim or for practising leaping? I do not exactly see what is your object in spending those three hours in bed.’

‘Oh, you mean that I might get up early!’ said Julian. ‘So I might, certainly; but I do not know how it is, that I always go to sleep again after we are called.’

‘And we have to get up early at school,’ said Paul, looking very badly used; ‘don’t make us get



up early in the holidays, cousin Kate. It will soon be harder work here than in school-time.'

Kate laughed. 'Do not look so rueful, Paul. I will not cruelly break in upon your ten hours and three-quarters' sleep; for I believe you seldom leave your bed before a quarter to nine. But Julian cannot with any reason complain of want of time, when his day might begin three or four hours earlier than it does. Then, Julian, you have also some time in the evening that is not at present employed in any real manner. Cannot you take from seven to eight for your paddock exercise? You will still have two hours to sit in the drawing-room. So you see I can supply you with four hours that you were not aware you possessed.'

'Indeed, it appears that I have wasted them completely,' said Julian. 'I will get up to-morrow and come down to the lake for my first swimming lesson. When we get up to the house, I will go and ask Davis if he can come then.'

'And you, Paul,' said Cecilia, 'do you not wish to learn to swim too?'

'I would,' replied Paul lazily, 'if it could be done in the day, but it is so disagreeable to get up when one is half asleep; and besides, I do not want to do any more things: we are as busy as possible all day.'

'And do you not like being busy?' asked Kate; 'confess, Paul, that you have been happier during this holiday than you were the last.'

‘Yes,’ said Paul, ‘I like these holidays very much; I am quite happy, though I have so much to do. And I don’t remember much of the last holidays, excepting that we dared not make any noise for fear of disturbing mama, and that we disputed and quarrelled a good deal.’

‘And did nothing, Paul,’ said Pen; ‘surely you remember that. Will you do something now, and untie the boat? Don’t you see cousin Kate looking at her watch?’ So Paul moved slowly down to the boat, and the rest of the party soon followed and started homeward.

‘If I practise at the bars after dinner,’ said Julian, ‘you may as well come too; you know papa said that your seat on horseback was insecure, and that you required a great deal of riding at the ring. So you can do that whilst I leap.’

‘For one hour I should not mind coming,’ said Paul; ‘but then, Cecilia, you must promise not to sing till I come in again.’

‘I will, at any rate,’ replied Cecilia, ‘go on singing after you come in; that will do, will it not?’

‘And you can take the opportunity of practising your singing whilst they are out,’ said Kate; ‘really I think this hour’s riding will answer very well.’

‘And I,’ cried Pen, ‘shall come to the paddock and watch you. I know you will often tumble off, Paul, when you ride at the ring without a saddle;

and Julian, I know, cannot leap higher than one foot !’

‘I give you leave, Pen,’ said Julian, ‘to come and criticise our riding; perhaps you will take a turn at the bars yourself.’

‘I believe I must forbid that,’ said Kate; ‘if Pen accompanies you, it must only be as a spectator.’

‘Well, I shall go now,’ said Julian, as they arrived at the boat-house, ‘and speak about the ponies; will you come, Paul?’ And they went together to the stables. Kate, instead of going into the house as usual, turned into the little garden gate.

‘Where are you going, Kate?’ asked Cecilia; ‘I thought you were always tired and glad to lie down after we come up from the island.’

‘So I am,’ replied Kate; ‘but I wish to speak to Davis, and probably he will be gone home if I delay till after dinner.’

‘Is it about the swimming?’ asked Pen; ‘shall I run on and see if he is about the garden?’

‘Do, dear Pen,’ said Kate; ‘that will save me a long walk perhaps.’ Cecilia and Kate strolled quietly along the pretty pleasure-grounds, and presently they saw Pen returning, accompanied by Davis.

‘Your young master, Davis,’ said Kate, ‘is thinking of learning to swim in the lake, and he trusts to you to teach him; but I am so fearful of any accident happening in the absence of Mr and Mrs Latimer, I thought I would ask you whether

you are quite willing and able to take the charge, and whether Mr Latimer had said anything to you about it.'

'Oh, my master knows,' replied Davis, 'that I was born and bred at a seaport town, and am like a fish in the water; and he did speak to me about teaching the young gentlemen. You need not fear to trust them with me, Miss. I shall have a rope round their waists, and shall not let them enter the water without it, until they are good swimmers.'

'Thank you, Davis,' said Kate; 'then I feel quite satisfied.' And they went back to the house.

'Shall you tell Julian, Kate,' said Pen, 'that you have spoken to Davis about taking care of him?'

'No, I think not, unless he were to ask me distinctly. Now let me have my rest until dinner-time.'

## CHAPTER VIII.

A Calculation—The Riding Lesson—Kate and Cecilia's quiet Conversation—The Morning Bath—The Surprise—Paul's Door.

'WELL, cousin Kate,' cried Julian as they met at dinner, 'I have made all my arrangements. I am to have my pony at the bars and the ring from seven to eight; and to-morrow morning Davis will be at the boat-house, ready for me at seven o'clock: so I shall use some of my four new hours to-morrow, and I expect to have a beautiful bath; won't you come, Paul?'

'I don't know,' said Paul. 'I should like it, I dare say, when I was down there; but I don't like to get up, so I won't promise; besides, I dislike having so much to do all day, and every day.'

'Do you know, Paul,' asked Cecilia, 'how much time we spend in bed—how much out of our lives? Kate was telling me the other day; and I felt quite shocked at the number of years that we sleep.'

'Years! we don't sleep years, Ciss, I am sure,' replied Paul.

'How many hours, generally, every night?' asked Cecilia.

‘About eight or ten, I think,’ he said; ‘not so much at school.’

‘Well, we will call it eight; and what part of twenty-four hours is that?’

‘It is a third, of course,’ said Julian; ‘we sleep one-third of our time, so out of twelve years we sleep four, and so on.’

‘There, you idle boy!’ cried Pen; ‘you have been in bed for four years, or very nearly, though you are not twelve, for certainly you take much more than eight hours. But only fancy a person of ninety years old, cousin Kate; he must have spent thirty years in bed; it really sounds dreadful!’

‘It does indeed,’ replied Kate; ‘so much so, that I always long to curtail the night as much as possible, by using all the pleasant early light.’

‘And do you rise early yourself, every day?’ asked Julian.

‘Indeed I do, otherwise I should not be able to manage my letters, and my own needlework and reading; for, as you see, my whole day is devoted to you and your sisters, excepting those precious early hours.’

‘Why, you come down to Pen’s music at seven or half-past, do you not?’

‘Not now till half-past seven; so I have two whole quiet hours in my own room, and I value them much.’

‘I think I shall try to diminish my years in bed,’

cried Julian; 'and now I am off to the paddock. Come, Paul, as you are already awake.'

'You will not finish singing till I come back,' said Paul, as he followed his brother.

'May I go with them?' asked Pen, looking wistfully after her brothers.

'Certainly, Pen,' replied Kate; 'but do not ride yourself. I dare not trust you, you are too venturesome.'

'I will only look on,' cried Pen, who was already at the hall door.

'You and I shall be alone for a whole hour, cousin Kate; that is become quite an unusual thing, at least out of lesson-time. Are you going to read, or will you work and talk to me?'

'I will work for a time; what have you to do yourself?'

'I have the collar I am embroidering for mama, and I have advanced very slowly lately with it.'

'Never mind, we have been busy making friends with your brothers, which I consider a matter of more importance than anything else. I think you have made great progress with Paul, chiefly by means of the music.'

'Yes, and by taking something to eat to the island for him,' said Cecilia, laughing. 'Paul is fond of eating.'

'So are most young boys,' replied Kate. 'I do not perceive any very particular greediness about Paul, and he has been lately so little invited to

talk and be companionable, that we scarcely know what good qualities he has; and as for Julian, I must confess, dear Ciss, that I think you have been a little to blame about him. You must make allowance for the invariable love of teasing that attaches to boys; and if you would bear his remarks with good humour, I am sure you would find him affectionate and obliging. Do you observe how much better he gets on with Pen than with you?

‘Yes, I have often noticed it; Pen is bolder than I am, and does not mind retorting upon him; and besides that, I really think he likes her a great deal better than he likes me.’

‘That is a mere fancy, Ciss; and if he does so, it is that he can joke and talk with Pen without fearing to rouse vexation, and perhaps a little tinge of sulkiness.’

‘Do you indeed think me sulky, cousin Kate? I am so sorry.’

‘I should perhaps not say sulky, but what is often termed a little touchy. I mean that you feel yourself aggrieved and annoyed when no such thing was intended. I allow that Julian teases, or would do so, were I not to shield you; but believe me that a little of the fault is your own. Try to amend it, dear Cecilia. Altogether, you have been happier than during the last holidays. Have you not?’

‘Oh! indeed we have,’ cried Cecilia. ‘It is so entirely different. First there was mama getting



worse and worse every day ; and I was so frightened because papa kept saying she would improve as summer came on, and not thinking she was half as ill as she was.'

'And what was it, Cecilia, that led him to be anxious about her?'

'It was my aunt's doing. She came here, you know, just at the end of the holidays, and she was so shocked to see mama. When papa came in a little before dinner, aunt Ellen went into his study with him, and I suppose told him there how very ill she thought mama ; for he did not come to dinner at all, but ordered his horse, and rode away to Denton for Dr Benham.'

'Who had been attending your mama before that?'

'Oh, she only saw Mr Green every day. Then all dinner-time aunt Ellen looked so grave, and did not talk at all ; and Julian and Paul were very noisy, trying to make Pen laugh ; and I saw that they worried her dreadfully.'

'Well, Cecilia, when your papa came back?'

'He brought Dr Benham with him, and we were in the hall when they arrived. Papa spoke so angrily to us, and told us to go out in the park, and not to let him hear us again before bed-time ; and I would have given anything to have crept into the drawing-room, and have heard what the doctor said, and I felt so inclined to cry.'

‘Then I suppose Julian took the opportunity of teasing you.’

‘Yes, he laughed at my cross face and pushed me about, and altogether I never was so unhappy. I dared not go into the drawing-room again, so I waited on the stairs till mama came up to bed; and I squeezed myself into her room behind Ellis, who held her arms, and kissed her, and said good-night. Then during breakfast next morning, papa and aunt Ellen talked of how it was best to get to Pau, and who was to go with mama; and I remember so well my aunt saying, “I think I could spare Kate from home to take charge of your girls.” And I felt so afraid of your coming, because —’

‘Why, Cecilia? Pray let me hear how you came to dread me?’

‘I was afraid of vexing you by saying that I thought aunt Ellen so very strict, and a little unkind. She might have thought, cousin Kate, that I should be very eager to hear all about my own mama, and to stay with her as much as possible; but she never said a word to me, and turned me out of mama’s room if she found me there.’

‘And you thought I should be the same? I believe I must confess that mama is a little repelling to very young people; but you know, Cecilia, that your own fear for your mother made you sad, and unable to join in your brother’s gaiety. In the same way, my mother was so alarmed about

the state of her sister, that she had no room for you in her mind.'

'Well, I was very happy to find you so different, cousin Kate; and you have made these holidays quite pleasant to us all.'

'But I hope still to see you and Julian the best of friends before I leave you.'

'Leave us! Oh, we need not talk about that yet. Mama is to spend the whole winter in the south of France, and not to return until the spring is quite gone by; so you will be here another year nearly. I often wonder, though, cousin Kate, how they do spare you from your home. We shall never be able to spare you from ours.'

'Do you know, Cecilia, who there is now at my home?'

'Yes, I think so. There is your eldest sister, my cousin Margaret; and there is a very old lady indeed, your aunt, and my great-aunt. That is all, is it not? Oh! my uncle; I forgot him. Well, I wonder he likes to spare you.'

'You see he has another daughter at home to attend to his household and to him; and Margaret is not one to let any one feel a want or a blank. I mean, that she will so entirely and thoroughly do all that is requisite, that papa will never be led to say, "I wish your mother were back, or that Kate were at home again," in consequence of any neglect. Of course he misses my mother much, and I hope he also misses me a little bit.'

‘Is Margaret like you, cousin Kate?’

‘She is a little like me, but taller and handsomer. She is an improvement upon me in all ways,—a larger mind, a larger heart, and so on.’

‘I do not believe that, Kate; but if your sister Margaret does so much at home, what have you to do there?’

‘I do more out of the house than in it,’ said Kate. ‘My work there is chiefly among the village people. I attend to the school, and often examine the children, in order to be sure that the mistress and master teach the children properly; and then I tell the clergyman what I observe about them, for he has no wife, and he is glad of help from some of the ladies.’

‘Well, Kate, what next?’

‘Then I go a regular round of all the old people, and all the sick; and that takes up my morning pretty well. In the evening I teach the choir, the people who sing in church; and alternately I have a reading for the older people, whoever has leisure to come for an hour.’

‘So the only time you have for yourself is the afternoon. What do you do then?’

‘I drive my mother out sometimes, go with her to visit our neighbours, or take a walk with her; or else I help Margaret in the garden, for we have a most lovely garden. Margaret takes great pleasure in it, and spares no pains to have it

always blooming and always nice. She is chief gardener, but I also do a good deal.'

'I do not know much about our garden here. I always think the gardener would not like me to interfere. I am sure I could not venture to dig up or touch any plant.'

'There, again, your own shyness and backwardness in being friendly with any one, stands in the way of a great enjoyment. I must try to put you and the gardener on a better footing together. I am sure that he would be better pleased were you and Pen to take an interest in the flower-borders and greenhouse. But here come the riders.'

'Have you stopped singing, Ciss?' cried Paul.

'No, I have not begun yet. I will sing presently; but tell us about your riding.'

'There is nothing to tell,' replied Paul.

'Oh yes,' said Pen, 'there is. Julian would have the bar higher than Harrison wished, and so he fell off when Selim leapt; then he tried a peg lower, and did famously. As for Paul, he cannot sit at all at the ring, except in a very gentle trot, and is always catching hold of the mane. It amused me very much, and made me laugh a great deal. I am quite tired.'

'You shall not come another evening, Miss Pen,' said Julian, 'to make fun of us; you quite put me off my leaps, clapping your hands and calling out, "Now, now, Julian!"'

‘This is quite new, is it not, Kate,’ said Cecilia, laughing, ‘to hear Julian complain of having been really teased and made nervous by a little girl? We are changing characters.’

‘But I agree with Julian,’ returned Kate, ‘that Pen must not go if she annoys her brothers. After I have tried to prevent the foolish teasing on one side, it would never do, dear Pen, for it to commence on the other.’ Pen looked rather ashamed.

‘It was very tempting, cousin Kate, when I found that I could really put Julian out of his way; but I will not do it again.’

‘And now, Pen,’ resumed her cousin, ‘allow Paul to listen to Cecilia’s singing in peace.’ Julian took the portfolio again.

‘I shall look out a nice sketch to copy,’ said he; ‘go on, Ciss.’ And after three or four songs, the party went off to bed, Pen declaring that she was quite certain Davis would wait at the lake to no purpose the following morning.

So, when she came out of her own room a little after seven, she went to her brothers’ door and listened. Hearing nothing, she gently opened the door and peeped in. He was actually gone, his bed was empty. Paul was fast asleep; so she quietly withdrew, and ran down to her music.

‘He is gone!’ she cried when Kate came down. ‘I really thought he would not have got up; but Paul is snug in bed. Now, Kate, I am going to employ my time immensely.’ And she practised with

much energy for the half-hour. Julian looked very fresh when he came in to breakfast.

‘I have been up ever since six, cousin Kate,’ he cried. ‘I had a beautiful bath, and I shall soon be able to swim, I believe. And since that, I have been busy about plants for our garden. I went with Davis into mama’s garden; and, do you know, I never before noticed how very pretty it is.’

‘I was saying to Cecilia yesterday that I regretted she did not take more interest in the garden. Your mother is extremely fond of it, and has formerly taken much trouble with it. But I suppose latterly she has not been strong enough to attend to it.’

‘No; I think this summer Davis has had it all his own way, and I should think he is rather weary of planting flowers which no one ever looks at,’ said Pen.

‘Oh, he told me this morning that he longs for mama to return, and that he is quite disheartened at going on so, with no one to admire his show of geraniums, and all sorts of things. However, he tries for the prizes at Denton flower-shows, and often gets them, he tells me.’

‘We must hear about the plants for the island at another time, Julian,’ said Kate, ‘for now we are going to the schoolroom.’

‘Just tell me whether we shall ride this afternoon, as I will order the ponies.’

‘Yes, I think we are tolerably decided to ride,

and Cecilia stays at home to paint her glass ; so we need not borrow the farmer's pony to-day.' Cecilia spent a very quiet and busy afternoon in colouring the glass for her window. Some time previously, she had had a number of pieces of glass cut to fit the windows in her own and Pen's room, but she had never used them. Now she found they were too large for the little frame in the Lodge ; and as she had a similar frame still acting as a door to the set of shelves, she could measure exactly. She took her hat and carried her glass down to the glazier in the village, got it cut to the right size, and brought it back. Then she coloured the glass on the ground side with thin transparent oil colour. About eight of the little panes filled up the frame ; so she made half of a pale rose colour, and half green, then set them up on the top of the bookcase to dry, and her work was just finished when the riding party returned. They had had a delightful ride, they said, and should go to their island the next day with new spirit. This sort of life continued very pleasantly for many days. The boys finished their holiday task ; and then, by Kate's advice, went on with the books that they were to read when they returned to school ; and instead of the maps, Julian said he would try to copy some of his mother's sketches, as Cecilia had done. Most of her finished water-colour landscapes were hung up in the drawing-room ; but there was a portfolio full of slight sketches, with some more finished, which



Cecilia had leave to copy whenever she liked, and Julian had examined these during several evenings. He took out one, which he showed to Kate, saying that he thought he could copy it. The subject was an old-fashioned wide archway, leading into a farm-house yard; the house was also of old date, with mullioned windows. At one side was a large willow hanging over a pond, and several rustic figures were entering the gate. This was painted in a bold quick style, without being highly finished; and Julian held it up, saying—

‘That is just the kind of thing that I like, cousin Kate; and I am sure I can copy it well, all but the willow; yet there are so few touches in the foliage, that it seems stupid not to be able to do it.’ Pen came and looked over Kate’s shoulder at the drawing, and then she clapped her hands and exclaimed—

‘Look, Cecilia! do come and look what he has picked out to copy!’ Cecilia came.

‘I see,’ she said; ‘it is the sketch of Holm farm.’ And she put her finger on her lips as she looked at Pen.

‘Well, what is there to clap your hands about, and what so wonderful?’

‘Only that I am sure you cannot copy that, Julian: look at the ducks in the pond, and the goat in the corner—how difficult they are!’

‘The ducks!’ said Julian contemptuously; ‘there is not much difficulty in ducks, it is the tree that

will puzzle me; and, of course, I do not expect to do it as well as mama, though this is one of her early ones. I shall be quite satisfied if it is half as well.' Pen laughed, and clapping her hands again, went back to her slate, and Julian sat down to his drawing.

The Lodge progressed rapidly. Pen used up all her pebbles, and one evening they all went to the gravel-pit to help her to collect more. Cecilia fixed her panes one above the other, each lapping a little over the one below, with a very small line of putty to keep it in its place, and with putty in the ledge of wood at each side. They seemed quite firm, and looked very pretty. About Paul's door there had been much amusement. Paul had come in extremely late to breakfast one morning, looking excessively hot. Pen, of course, assailed him with questions, but could elicit nothing, except that it was very odd she could not let him go out early as well as Julian, without making such a fuss.

'Oh, but I know where Julian goes,' said Pen. 'He bathes and learns to swim for half an hour, and then he goes with Davis into the garden, and learns about plants and seeds, and helps him to garden till breakfast-time.'

'Well, I can tell you that Paul was not with me,' remarked Julian. 'I did not see him after I left our room.'

'You will know in time where I have been,' said Paul, looking mysterious.

‘Now I think of it,’ cried Pen, ‘you never told us about your mystery one morning before. What was it?’

‘You will know that at the same time as this,’ said Paul.

‘Then I do not care at all. Come, Ciss. You will have to breakfast alone, Mr Paul; so good-bye.’ When they arrived at the island that afternoon, Pen ran up to the Lodge the first, and announced some discovery with a shout of delight.

‘Oh, you cunning Paul!’ she cried, ‘you have actually been working here this morning. How did you manage to get the boat here by yourself, with this heavy great door in it too. And what a famous door! Did you make it all yourself?’

‘I am quite certain he did not,’ said Julian, ‘and I do not think it is fair.’

‘It is quite fair,’ returned Paul. ‘I engaged to supply the door, and there it is. I do not say that I made it all myself. How could I? I have no plane, no carpenter’s bench, and not half the tools required.’

‘Well, then, tell us where you got it. Will you, Paul? Was it made on purpose?’

‘No, not on purpose. The morning I went down to get some wood from the carpenter’s, I said I wanted it to make a door; and he asked me what size. So I showed him the measure I had taken roughly at the Lodge the day before, and he said he had a nice strong door very nearly of that size,

which had by some mistake not fitted the room it was meant for.'

'So you bought it from him?' said Pen.

'Yes, it was quite useless to the carpenter, so he gave it to me for not much, and I measured it exactly, and made my frame here just to fit it. The carpenter showed me what to do, and marked the posts I brought, with a pencil, for me to saw.'

'It was very odd,' said Pen, 'that I did not see those pencil marks. So you have in fact, Paul, done very little of it yourself.'

'I consider that I did a very great deal,' replied Paul. 'I had many days' work at the frame, and this morning I got up dreadfully early, and went to the carpenter's.'

'Who helped you to carry the door?' asked Cecilia.

'The carpenter's boy came with me; then we watched till Julian and Davis came up from the lake, and we managed to get the door down.'

'But you are such a bad rower, Paul,' said Kate, 'that I wonder you accomplished it in the time.'

'The carpenter's boy rows famously,' said Paul. 'He rowed across in half the time that Julian does. You never found out, Julian, that I took the key of the boat-house out of your pocket while you were dressing.'

'I did not, indeed,' returned Julian. 'Why, cousin Kate, what a sudden spurt of activity Paul has taken on himself this morning!'

‘He has indeed,’ replied Kate; ‘but finish telling us, Paul, how you managed.’

‘Why, we got the boat to the island, dragged the door up to the Lodge; and the boy fixed it up so quickly, I was astonished to see him work. Then we went back again as fast as we could.’

‘Well,’ cried Pen, ‘my floor has been entirely my own work; nobody has helped me.’

‘Did not I attend you to the gravel-pit one evening,’ said Julian; ‘and did not we all go another evening, and help you to collect your pebbles? I consider you extremely ungrateful.’

‘But the putting in of the pebbles no one helped me in. Is it not nice, Kate?’

‘I think it is very pretty, Pen, and evenly and nicely done; but does it not catch a little just under the door?’

‘Yes, it wants pressing down a little just there. I must find the end of a log to thump it with.’

‘Now, will anybody please to remark my poor roof,’ cried Julian, ‘the most important part of the whole concern?’

‘As far as it goes, Julian,’ said Kate, ‘it is good, and your work is solid and well done; but I think you should have finished it by either plastering the ceiling, or by nailing small laths across the rafters; for though it is weather-proof, I do not doubt, still the backs of your tiles, with the pegs sticking downwards, do not look pretty, and are not a match for this really pretty floor and pretty window.’

‘Do I not remember something about your undertaking the walls, cousin Kate? These rough stones match no better than the ceiling with the floor and the window. If you will make an elegant-looking wall, I will try what I can do to beautify my ceiling.’

‘We did talk about the wall,’ replied Kate; ‘and do you not remember that I went to the garden, because there was not room for me to work inside the Lodge? But now that all our separate undertakings are finished, I propose that we shall all join in doing this piece of work. It will soon be finished, and we shall be able to commence our living.’

‘How shall we cover the stones?’ asked Cecilia.  
‘That must be settled first.’

‘Let me say,’ cried Pen, ‘it would take an immense time to cut sticks for the whole, for we talked of covering it with twigs. But I know of a large quantity of fir-cones, cousin Kate. We collected them once in the woods, and I saw them the other day in the lumber-room.’

‘Fir-cones, Pen!’ said Julian; ‘it would take thousands to cover this wall all round.’

‘I don’t want to cover it,’ said Pen. ‘You won’t let me say what I wish to do. I will tell Kate. First, plaster the wall all over with common wall plaster, the same that I used for the floor; and then, whilst it is wet, stick into it the fir-cones on their sides, so that half will sink into the plaster

and half stand out. We could do them in all sorts of patterns, with the large and small cones.'

'Indeed a very good plan, Pen. I can think of no better. And there would be no occasion to cover the plaster. Make diamonds or other shapes with the cones, leaving the plaster to show between.'

'That is it exactly, cousin Kate,' cried Pen. 'You see, Julian, she understood directly. Would it not be pretty?'

'Perhaps it might,' said Julian; 'and that plan might suit the ceiling as well as the wall.'

'Agreed,' said Kate. 'Then to-morrow we must bring a tub of plaster, and Pen's store of fir-cones.'

This work had taken several days, and they had varied their afternoons by a ride and a long walk, so that the second week after their father's departure soon slipped away.

One evening they were all preparing letters for Pau; and on Kate replying to Julian's question about what day of the month it was, he exclaimed—

'Why, Kate, half our holidays are actually past. I never thought of it or noticed it before. We shall not have much time for living in our island, for we have still a great deal to do to it.'

'Do you think, cousin Kate,' asked Cecilia, 'that papa will come home before Julian and Paul return to school?'

'I hope so,' replied Kate. 'He spoke of being away a month, and there are still three weeks of

holidays remaining; so, if your papa returns in a fortnight, he will be with your brothers for a week.'

'Then do let us make haste to get our Lodge ready, so that we may pass a week there before he comes,' cried Pen; 'for, of course, we must not be away all day then.'

'You are right, Pen. Let us transplant our kitchen-garden things, and make our store of plates, and so on.'

'And, above all, let the fire-place be arranged. How is that to be?' asked Kate. 'Have you thought about it at all?'

'A stove would do best, I should think,' remarked Cecilia. 'We never could build a chimney for a downright fire-place.'

'Yes, I really think we must go to the expense of buying a small stove,' returned Julian.

'You need not,' exclaimed Pen. 'I know of a very nice little stove that nobody uses, and I dare say we may have it.'

'Pen is most excellent at resources,' said Kate. 'Do you observe, Julian, that it is always Pen who provides for an emergency? She always knows where odd things are.'

'Yes,' replied Cecilia, 'she always notices everything. She knew where those fir-cones were; and though I had helped to collect them, I had forgotten, and knew nothing about them. Now this little stove that she speaks of, I have not the least



idea where it is ; I cannot remember ever seeing such a thing.'

'Oh,' said Pen, laughing, 'it is in a place where you very seldom go, Ciss, but where I have often been. It is in the saddle-room. It was formerly used there to keep the saddles dry ; and when papa had a little fire-place and chimney made, it was put in the corner, and the pipe that makes its chimney is there too. It has a flat top, and I dare say we could boil anything on it.'

'We must go and look at it,' said Kate ; 'and if likely to suit us, we must try to coax Harrison out of it. Will you, Pen, undertake to provide plates, cups, knives, and forks ? I can leave you to think of what will really be requisite. The eatables we will still trust to Cecilia.'

'And you know, cousin Kate,' said Pen, 'that fetching all these things from home does not make it unlike an island of shipwrecked people, because they always had the wreck of a ship to go to.'

'I should not have found my door and my carpenter's boy, though, in a wreck,' said Paul.

'You might have found a carpenter's chest, and so have been able to make it yourself,' replied Julian. 'I doubt whether I could have helped myself to tiles and mortar out of a ship ; and I never heard of coloured pebbles or fir-cones making part of a ship's cargo.'

'Nonsense, Julian,' cried Pen ; 'a ship contains everything that is useful ; and if we had not found

those exact things, we should have found others that would have done as well. I shall never finish my letter, cousin Kate; do let us stop talking.'

'Willingly,' returned Kate; 'banish all thoughts of the Lodge, and let your letters be long and pleasant, describing all our doings.'

## CHAPTER IX.

A Day on the Island—Cooking—Things Forgotten—The Breakfast—Preparations for Dinner—Home Supplies.

AFTER several more days' work at the Lodge, it was decided that they might venture on a whole day there. The little stove in the saddle-room had been examined and pronounced the very thing. One or two old-fashioned oak stools had been found in the lumber-room where Pen had seen the cones; and a little hammering and nailing made them fit for use. Cecilia and Pen took down their own small wicker-chairs from the schoolroom, and for Kate's especial use Pen coaxed the housekeeper to let her have one of the mahogany chairs out of the entrance-hall. Their table was a small round one, which had the advantage of shutting down at the sides; so that, when not wanted, it was a mere narrow slip, and took very little space. Cecilia's corner cupboard had been pronounced too small, and was replaced by an oaken box that had also been found in the saddle-room. It was carved in front, and had handsome large hinges and lock. When closed, it answered as a settee or bench; and the inside was devoted, half to Cecilia's stores, and half to the

cups, plates, jugs, and mugs, of which they had just enough to give each a cup, and plate, and mug. One jug was pronounced sufficient. Their stove during the summer was placed at the back of the Lodge, with a small pent-house sloping over it to protect it from rain. A kettle, a saucepan, and frying-pan formed their cooking apparatus, with a knife and fork for each, and three iron spoons. Julian had swept out the old duck-house, and had brought four or five ducks from the farm, which seemed to enjoy the lake very much. Davis had transplanted for him some young cabbages which were ready for planting out, some turnips, and some celery; but he told Julian that it was impossible to do much with a kitchen-garden so late in the year. However, some radishes and lettuces were sown on the chance of their becoming eatable; and Julian said that, as they might suppose the garden to have been stocked in proper time, he should every day bring down a basket of peas and beans, or cabbages.

‘To-morrow, Kate,’ said Pen, ‘I really think we might spend the day here; do let us try. If we find it very uncomfortable, we can but go home again.’

‘What an inglorious way of getting out of a difficulty, Pen! I do not agree to it in the least. If we come to live here for a day, we ought on no pretence to go back till bed-time.’

‘Very well,’ replied Pen; ‘I am not at all afraid

that we shall do badly. Will you consent to come, cousin Kate?’

‘Yes, I have no objection. You consider that you have provided everything that we shall want for cooking and eating, including plates?’

‘Oh yes, there are plenty; and Cecilia has a quantity of little parcels of things, and bottles, in her half of the box.’

‘Then our plan will be to come down to the lake by the time Julian has finished bathing.’

‘By half-past seven it will be, cousin Kate. I shall be quite ready to row you across the lake.’

The next morning, the whole party, Paul included, were punctually at the boat-house by half-past seven. Kate had sent for the housekeeper, and told her not to feel alarmed at their absence from breakfast, luncheon, and dinner, as they intended to pass the whole day in the island. The old woman had made many shrugs and despairing faces at the idea, and begged that Kate would allow her to send down their dinner, or something in the middle of the day.

‘No, no,’ cried Pen; ‘why, you would spoil the best part of our amusement, which is cooking for ourselves. Besides, how can you send if we have the boat with us?’

‘James could walk round by the bank,’ replied Mrs Bakewell, ‘till he came opposite the island; and then you could ask Master Julian to take the boat across for the basket. It will be much

better, Miss Penelope ; you will have nothing you can eat.'

'Don't insult us, Mrs Bakewell,' cried Pen. 'You will see how well we shall look when we return. Good-bye!'

A variety of different parcels and baskets were handed into the boat. Cecilia had a bottle which she protected with great care, and Pen was equally solicitous about the welfare of two bags which she held on her knee.

'Ciss has brought ginger-beer,' said Paul ; 'but what can you possibly have in those bags, Pen?'

'This is the most important and useful thing that we have at all,' replied Pen. 'You will know what it is when you eat it.'

'And this is not ginger-beer,' said Cecilia ; 'it is something that we should miss a great deal more. You will know that too when you drink it.'

'What are we to do first?' asked Paul, when they arrived.

'I should say first light the fire, for we shall all be ready for breakfast after this water excursion. Who is to be chief cook?'

'I think I can manage for breakfast,' replied Cecilia, 'if you will cook the dinner, cousin Kate ; and then I will be your kitchen-maid.'

'Very well then, Ciss ; begin your breakfast as fast as possible, for I am dreadfully hungry.'

'Oh, you must light the fire, Julian,' cried Cecilia ; 'then I can go on.' A little package of

sticks, and some coke and coal, had been arranged at the back of the Lodge, and Julian now produced a box of matches, and began laying the fire.

‘You are putting it too close together,’ said Pen. ‘Those sticks should be built up with plenty of space between them, else it won’t burn.’

‘Go along, Pen,’ said Julian; ‘you need not teach me how to make a fire.’

‘Well, I shall run away, for you make me long to do it myself.’ And she went to the duck-house, and was fortunate enough to find three eggs, with which she returned in triumph. Julian, with Cecilia’s help, had contrived to make the fire burn.

‘Now,’ said Cecilia, ‘if you will go away, Julian, we shall be able to make some breakfast.’

‘I hope so indeed,’ he said. ‘We will prepare the table for you.’

‘Now, Pen,’ said Cecilia, ‘if you will put the coffee in the saucepan, and watch it boil, I will mix the cakes in a large plate, and then bake them on the top of the stove.’

‘Here is the coffee,’ said Pen, ‘but where is the water?’ Cecilia looked blank.

‘Take it to Kate,’ said she, ‘and ask what we must do.’ So Pen, looking rather sheepish, went cautiously round the Lodge, hoping to find Kate away from the boys. Yes! she was alone in the Lodge.

‘Here, Kate,’ whispered Pen, holding out her saucepan of dry coffee, ‘we never thought about water. What shall we do?’

‘Oh, you bad cooks,’ said Kate, laughing; ‘and I asked you so often whether you had prepared all. We must take the jug and dip it in the lake; that is all. It does not look very nice, but there is no real harm in it; and for boiling coffee, I do not doubt that it will do as well as the best spring water.’ So Kate went to the landing-place and filled the jug, which was not very large. Pen ran back with it, poured it into the saucepan, and returned for more.

‘Wait a moment, Kate,’ she said; ‘I will add this to the coffee, and run back for another jugful to boil our eggs in. That is famous,’ she exclaimed, as she possessed herself of the third jugful. ‘I am so glad we have got it without Julian and Paul seeing. But where are they?’

‘They are busy at something among those bushes near the duck-house. Don’t you hear them? But run back, Pen, to your cooking.’

‘Come,’ said Cecilia, as her sister joined her, ‘attend to that coffee, because I am obliged to keep turning these cakes every minute, or else they will burn.’ The stove had a door, so that Pen could hold her saucepan upon the little fire. The chimney pipe went out at the back, leaving a flat plate of iron at the top of the stove, on which Cecilia had felt sure she could bake some biscuits, or flat cakes. She had rubbed and polished this top quite bright; and having mixed some dough at the house before they left; or rather having watched the housekeeper mix it with milk and baking powder, she had only



to divide it on a plate into round cakes. They were baking famously on the hot top of the stove; and by the time the coffee had boiled, she had six or seven ready. Kate came round to see what they were doing.

‘The smell of the coffee makes me feel quite hungry,’ she said. ‘And what are these?—nice hot cakes, I declare. Well, all that there is to lay out is placed on the table already, so bring your coffee and bread.’

‘I am quite puzzled, Kate,’ said Pen, holding the saucepan in her hand. ‘I want to pour the coffee into that jug, but I must have the water out of the jug to boil the eggs in the saucepan; so how can I change the contents?’

‘The shortest way,’ said Kate, ‘is to empty the jug; and she poured it out on the ground. Now, Pen, put your coffee in the jug, then run to the landing-place and fill your saucepan. Cecilia and I will take in what there is, whilst you boil the eggs.’ Julian and Paul were on the walk in front.

‘Fetch water out of the lake!’ cried Julian. ‘What is that for?’

‘Only to boil eggs,’ replied Pen. ‘Go in to your breakfast.’ There was a large jug of milk on the table, a piece of butter, Cecilia’s buns or cakes, and a jug of coffee.

‘That is a very fair breakfast for a desert island,’ said Julian. ‘How did you manage these buns, Cecilia?’

‘The dough was in one of the bags, Paul,’ said Cecilia, ‘and I have flour in the other bag, so that for dinner and tea I shall make the dough myself.’

‘Well, whoever made it, it is very good,’ said Julian, ‘and so is the coffee. Come along, Pen. What! did you find all those eggs in the duck-house?’

‘Did you ever hear of hens’ eggs being found in a duck-house?’ shouted Pen. ‘What would you have said if I or Cecilia had said such a thing? I found three, and we had some hens’ eggs in Cecilia’s store, so there is one for each. Have we not managed well with the little stove?’

‘But,’ said Cecilia, ‘we must tell our difficulty about water. Where do you think we found water, Julian?’

‘I saw Pen fetch it out of the lake; but she said it was only to boil eggs in.’

‘That water was really to boil eggs. Don’t you know the coffee was in here at that time?’

‘Then what water was used for coffee?’

‘Is there any other water here, Julian, but the lake?’ said Cecilia. ‘We did use it; and I believe we must always use it if we cook here.’

‘People on desert islands,’ said Pen, ‘always had trouble about finding water. Cannot we dig a well?’

‘Shipwrecked people usually had the salt sea round their islands, instead of a fresh-water lake, and I think we may be well satisfied with it. It is, indeed, impossible to supply ourselves with any other.’

‘I don’t fancy it, cousin Kate,’ said Julian; ‘it is so dead and insipid. Will you tell me how I am to eat this egg? I am trying to do so with a fork, but it does not answer; and these great spoons, as you see, will not go into the shell.’

‘Look at mine,’ said Pen; ‘I have taken off all the shell, and I shall eat it with knife and fork, just as one eats a poached egg.’

‘Will you and Paul “wash up?”’ asked Cecilia.

‘Wash up!’ replied Julian. ‘No indeed; that is your work. Don’t you know we have to supply food for dinner? You have not brought meat with you?’

‘No; you said you would catch fish, and I think you have vegetables in the sack outside. Perhaps I had better make some more cakes at once, Kate. What do you think?’

‘Decidedly. Make more now, both for dinner and tea; and whilst you do so, Pen and I will wash those things. Where is your bowl for washing them?’

‘Bowl! We have nothing but the jug and the saucepan, and the milk-jug.’

‘Then we must wash them in the saucepan. There is hot water in it, is there not?’

‘It will be cold now, most likely, but I will warm it again.’

‘And we will go and see after the fishing,’ said Julian. ‘Come along, Paul; you take the net, and I will use the line.’

‘Where is your glass-cloth, Pen?’ asked Kate.

‘Oh, I have not one. I never thought of it.’

‘And yet you thought of a table-cloth; but one is as necessary as the other. How shall we dry the cups and plates? We must leave them on the table, and let them dry by themselves.’

‘That will do,’ returned Pen. ‘They will be dry by dinner-time, I dare say.’ So Cecilia cooked bread, and Kate and Pen cleared away the breakfast things.

‘Now, Kate, what are we to have for dinner? We can boil some potatoes and some peas, one after the other; but if the boys catch no fish, we can have nothing else.’

‘We can surely subsist on vegetables and bread for one day of our lives,’ returned Kate. ‘It is now half-past ten, so we need not think about dinner till nearly twelve. What do you say to making a neat little fence round our flower-garden? The Lodge has still an untidy look about it, with only a piece of bank made of sods. We have not made our two gardens distinct enough.’

‘Do you think we can find sticks enough in the island to make a fence?’ asked Pen.

‘We might find a good many among the bushes on that side. There are some willow-bushes there. Let us employ an hour in cutting some, and in the afternoon we can place them.’

‘Had we not better mend the fire?’ said Cecilia. ‘I have just finished my cakes. Do you think there will be enough for dinner and tea?’

‘Scarcely. It depends on whether we have any

fish. Pile up the fire, and come to seek for sticks. How are you getting on?' she asked, calling to Julian, who was at the further end of the island.

'Very badly,' he replied. 'I have nearly gone round the island, and I have only caught one perch, and Paul none at all.'

'It is scarcely likely that Paul will catch fish in that little net so near the shore. I advise you to go into the boat and try a little further from land.'

'I dare say we should do better. Come, Paul;' and the boys gathered together their implements and went to the boat.

'Have either of you a knife?' asked Cecilia; 'we are going to cut some sticks for a little fence, but the eating knives are not sharp enough, and the handles are awkward.'

'I have an excellent knife,' said Julian; 'I will lend it to you, Kate. Promise to take care of it.'

'And I have a good knife,' said Paul, 'but I am sure Cecilia cannot cut sticks so well as I can. If you will come in the boat, Ciss, and try for fish with my net, I will cut the sticks.'

'I would rather stay here with you,' whispered Cecilia to her cousin.

'But pray go,' returned Kate. 'You see Julian makes no objection. Go with him, and try to talk to him.' Cecilia went; and Julian having pulled the boat out into the lake, stationed her at the stern with the little net, and placed himself at the other

end. Paul proved himself to be an excellent cutter of sticks, and in half an hour produced twice as many as either Kate or Pen, and rather triumphantly he threw down his bundle by the side of theirs.

‘Now, cousin Kate, is not that better work than yours?’

‘I quite acknowledge it,’ replied Kate. ‘Practice makes perfect, and I dare say you are rather in the habit of cutting sticks, for I know that a stick is an extreme source of delight to every boy; whilst, on my part, I cannot remember that I ever did such a thing before, and therefore I am awkward about it. I should have thought, Pen, that you were rather addicted to sticks. How is it that you have succeeded no better than me?’

‘I think it was partly this inconvenient knife,’ said Pen; ‘you both had good knives. What are we to do now?’

‘Divide the large sticks from the smaller,’ said Kate. ‘We will thrust those into the ground, and then cross the smaller ones.’

‘Then I had better cut sharp points at the bottom of these sticks,’ said Paul.

‘Yes, whilst Pen and I mark the line that we will place them in.’ The Lodge was about fifty yards from the bank, so Kate proposed that they should fence in a half circle in front of the little abode, reaching about half-way to the water, and that the path from the landing-place should be edged on

each side by rough stones piled together, between which they could plant fern and all sorts of rock plants; and where this joined the garden fence they would make a rustic gate, and all outside the garden was to be planted with potatoes or other useful things, with the exception of a waste piece at the back of the Lodge, which was to be used for carpentering, cleaning tools and other things—in short, for all the untidy work. And besides this, the little wilderness of willows, bushes, and long grass that covered the island on the south side, was also to be left for the convenience of the ducks, and for a supply of sticks. Their kitchen-garden had not thriven much: it was such hard work to dig up the rough stony soil, that though they had really cleared a good deal of space, and had even planted cabbages and a few other things, there was no prospect of their being eatable this summer. The ground in front of the Lodge was quite free from brushwood and rubbish, so they marked their line for the fence easily, and soon called to Paul to bring his sticks.

‘We shall want a mallet or heavy hammer to knock in these sticks,’ said Paul.

‘I dare say a large stone will do very well,’ suggested Pen; ‘I know where there is one.’ And she quickly fetched it and placed it in his hand. Paul knocked away with good will, and three or four sticks were presently driven in pretty firmly, at intervals of about a foot and a half.

‘Now, Mr Carpenter,’ said Kate, ‘where is your hammer and some small nails?’

‘They are in the ledge of the window, Pen. Will you run for them?’

‘See now,’ said Kate, ‘whether these smaller sticks will not look light and pretty laid across from one to the other of these posts in a slanting direction; but they must all be cut to the same length: so you, Paul and Pen, had better sit down and cut away till this bundle of sticks is all prepared to nail on; and I will call to the fishers, for it is time we should think of dinner.’

‘I am dreadfully hungry!’ cried Paul.

‘For shame,’ replied Pen, ‘after three or four cups of coffee and two great buns, and an egg, for breakfast.’

‘I don’t care; I could eat a whole leg of mutton now, I really believe. I am much more hungry than I am at home at luncheon-time.’ Pen thought she was too, but she forbore to say so; and Kate, Julian, and Cecilia soon came up the walk.

‘Two or three dozen, I hope!’ cried Paul.

‘No indeed,’ Julian answered, ‘just one fish for each, and one to spare; but they are of a tolerable size.’

‘Well, then, we must have a great heap of vegetables,’ said Paul. ‘How soon will it be ready?’

‘Have you thought about the fire, Pen?’ asked Cecilia.

‘No, I forgot it completely,’ said Pen; ‘one



does not think of fires these hot days.' And she ran to look at the poor little stove, which was, of course, completely cold.

'You are fire-lighter, Julian,' said Kate; 'go and make us a good blaze as fast as you can; and you, Paul, must undertake to clean and scrape these fish. Go away at the back of the Lodge, and manage it as well as you can.' Paul looked as if he did not much like the work, but he retired with the fish and his knife. Cecilia carried her frock full of potatoes down to the bank, and contrived to wash them there. Pen filled the saucepan with water, and then said she would shell the peas, of which Julian had brought a large heavy basket.

'Oh, I declare they are all shelled!' she cried; 'will you boil them at once, Kate? Think of that good-natured cook shelling them all for Julian!'

'I think I may as well boil them first,' said Kate, 'for cold peas will do better than cold potatoes; and of course they will get cold whilst we do the other things.'

'Will you go and prepare the table, Julian?' said Pen; 'and you can look out some porter bottles and ginger-beer out of Cecilia's box.' Paul brought the fish.

'Here, cousin Kate; they are all right, I think; but you must recollect I never did such a thing before; so don't wonder if they are not well done.'

‘They will do famously, Paul,’ replied Kate. ‘Now for something to fry them in, Cecilia; where is your lard, or dripping?’

‘You must take butter,’ answered Cecilia. ‘I never thought of anything else for frying; we shall have plenty for tea.’ So Kate fried the fish, as soon as the peas were boiled; and then she left the potatoes to boil, whilst they ate the fish with bread and the peas.

‘The fish is very nice,’ said Julian; ‘and so are the peas, if they were a little hotter. But it is rather inconvenient, is it not, Kate, only to be able to cook one thing at a time?’

‘It is very troublesome indeed,’ replied Kate. ‘If we could have two round holes made in the top of the stove, we could boil something in two small saucepans on the top, at the same time that we use the frying-pan.’

‘Oh, but then you will spoil my hot plate for baking,’ cried Cecilia; ‘and it really does very well for that purpose.’

‘We might have flat lids to slip in when we do not want the holes open,’ returned Kate. ‘I think, Julian, you must persuade the blacksmith to come down and do this for us, or else we shall always be in difficulties about our cooking.’

‘It will be better to take the stove to him,’ said Julian. ‘We will put it in the boat this evening; and, meantime, cannot we have some potatoes?’

‘I will fetch them,’ cried Pen. And she brought

back a small dish of potatoes. 'I have put some more in the saucepan,' she said, 'and stirred up the fire; for I am sure these will not be nearly enough.'

'No indeed,' said Paul; 'I could eat all those myself. Will not our saucepan hold more than that at once?'

'No; we must go on boiling potatoes and eating them as fast as they are done; that is our only way at present.'

'But I have something to finish with!' said Cecilia. And she brought out a large dish containing strawberries, cherries, currants, and raspberries, all heaped up together. 'There, Paul, comfort yourself with those as soon as you have finished your potatoes; here is a bun to eat with them.'

'Can we do with one more saucepanful of potatoes?' asked Pen, as she brought in the second plate.

'Yes, I think so,' replied Julian. 'Fill it once more, Pen.'

'Let me think,' said Paul. 'One fish and a little bit; a good plate of peas; about eight potatoes each; a bun, and a very fair pile of fruit. Yes, that is a tolerable dinner for a scramble.'

'You forget a tumbler of porter, and one of ginger-beer,' interposed Pen. 'I think you have managed pretty well, Master Paul; and as cousin Kate and I washed up this morning, you and Julian may take your turn at it this afternoon.'

‘Well, for once I will do it,’ replied Julian, ‘just to see what this washing-up is, that you make such a fuss about.’

‘Then you must help yourself to water, and towel, and everything,’ said Pen; ‘for that is the grand difficulty—to find one’s tools, or implements, or whatever you call them. I will go and help Cecilia to make things tidy in the kitchen, by which I mean the space round the stove.’ Presently Julian followed.

‘Pen, where is the bowl to wash the plates in? You say, Help yourself; but I believe you have hidden everything. I can neither find basin, jug, nor towel.’

‘We had neither basin nor towel this morning,’ said Pen, laughing. ‘Yet we washed the cups and plates. Cannot you do the same?’

‘Tell me what you put the water in, then.’ Pen handed him the little saucepan, full of hot water.

‘Is that all you had?’ cried Julian. ‘I cannot squeeze a plate into that.’

‘No; but you can wash the plates by sloping up the water upon them; in short, you must manage somehow. What a miserable contriver you are, Julian! Look how Cecilia is cleaning the frying-pan.’ Cecilia was seated on a log of wood, her pocket-handkerchief carefully spread over her knees, and with a great bunch of grass she was rubbing the frying-pan very successfully.

‘Do you mean to say that you have no towels, or dish-cloths of any sort?’

‘No; that is an article that the Lodge does not supply,’ said Pen. ‘Now go away; you are filling up our kitchen, and I want to sweep the floor and clean the stove.’ Julian went back to his plates, with the saucepan of hot water.

‘When you have all finished your cleaning-up,’ said Kate, ‘come and sit down on the bank of grass for a time, and we will rest ourselves, and think what we shall do next.’ Julian set up the plates to dry on the table, as he had found them in the morning. Following Cecilia’s example, he fetched a handful of grass to wipe the knives and forks, folded up the table-cloth, and put back the stool and chairs against the wall.

‘I had no idea, cousin Kate,’ said he, as he threw himself down on the bank by her side, ‘what a fuss and trouble it was to the servants to get ready one meal, and then to clear it away and clean the things. Even such a dinner as we have had to-day, has actually occupied us all for many hours. It is very disagreeable, I think, that we cannot live without spending so much time and thought on our eating.’

‘I have often thought so, Julian,’ replied Kate; ‘and till we try to do things for ourselves, we have no idea of the multitude of articles of different sorts that are required to make, as you say, one moderate meal. And this is the worst part of a scrambling life on a desert island, or anywhere else, that the

chief part of our existence is really employed in living, in providing the necessaries for our bodily existence.'

'To-day, for instance,' said Julian, 'if I had not brought wood and coal from home, I and Paul should have had to cut it down in the wood; we should have been an hour getting enough to cook our dinner.'

'And if we had not brought flour,' added Kate, 'think of the difficulty we should have had in obtaining it from wheat of our own growing!'

'Oh! it is endless, if we had not the house to resort to. Well, Cecilia, how do you like the island day?'

'I like it very well for once,' said Cecilia; 'but I do not think I should like every day to spend so much time in cooking and cleaning; and I confess, cousin Kate, that I rather miss our quiet morning lessons.'

'I like this!' exclaimed Pen. 'I think it is great fun.'

'So do I,' said Paul. 'I would rather be here than doing Latin in the schoolroom at home; but I do not much like cleaning fish; and generally, I should like a better dinner than we had to-day.'

'Well,' remarked Kate, 'the next time we come, I think we must bring a few more ready-cooked provisions from home, and also a basket of books, and a desk. I do not see why we should not follow our usual occupations in the Lodge.'

‘I should like that,’ said Cecilia. ‘We will certainly try it our next day, cousin Kate. I see you have brought a book with you to-day ; you could not be happy for one whole day without reading a little.’

‘No ; and it is very pleasant on this bank ; the little mountain ash just gives enough shade. I think, Julian, we must have a bench, or rustic seat, just on this spot, purposely for sitting here to read.’

‘And let us make a list of the things that we have most missed to-day, cousin Kate,’ said Pen ; ‘so that we shall know what to bring next time.’

‘Put down first, then, two or three towels to wipe the cups and plates : not that I ever mean to undertake washing them again ; I shall leave that to you girls ; but I do not see how you can do at all well without the towels, and also a bowl, or large basin.’

‘Yes, we certainly want those things very much, and some spoons for eating with.’

‘Very well,’ said Cecilia, ‘I will write them down ; I have my tablets. “Bowl,” “towels,” “spoons ;” what next, cousin Kate ?’

‘A piece of soap, for it would be pleasant to wash our hands after this cooking.’

““Soap,” “broom,” and “scrubbing-brush,”” said Cecilia ; ‘we must keep our Lodge clean. I cannot think of anything else at present.’

‘There is the old boat flag in a drawer in the hall ; I will bring it down and fix it up at the top of the Lodge, or else at the top of one of these trees,’

said Julian. 'We ought to have a pulley, so that we can display our flag when we are here, as the Queen does at Windsor Castle, and lower it when we are going away. It might do as a signal to the people at home that we are not coming home to dinner, or to tea.'

'That would be handy enough,' cried Pen. 'We must teach old Soames, the butler, to look out about half an hour before dinner-time; and if he sees the flag, he need not prepare the table; but if it is down, make haste and lay the cloth.'

'According to that plan,' said Kate, 'you compel the poor cook to make dinner ready whether we require it or not. You will have to hoist your flag, or to lower it, two or three hours before dinner-time, to be of any use.'

'Well, we could do so easily. Pray, let us bring it to-morrow, Julian.'

'There is a visit I ought to pay to-morrow afternoon,' said Kate. 'I propose that we spend the morning at home; and in the afternoon, if you like it, you shall come down here without me. I believe I can trust you together now, without any terrible disputing being the result. And I will go and make my long-owed visit.'

'It will seem quite strange to be without you, cousin Kate,' said Cecilia. 'I shall not say a word against it, because you have so given yourself up to us, that I am sure you will be glad of a little change.'



‘I am not at all sure, Cecilia,’ replied Kate, ‘that I should not prefer an afternoon here with you, to a visit where I am scarcely acquainted with the family; but I go as a matter of duty, which, as you know, always comes before pleasure.’

‘Our duty just now,’ said Pen, ‘is to get tea ready; you and Cecilia look so comfortable reclining here, that it is quite a pity to disturb you. Suppose you trust the tea to me and Paul. I dare say we can manage something eatable.’

‘By all means, Pen,’ said Cecilia, ‘save me the trouble, and Paul will be your kitchen-maid. Will you not, Paul?’

‘I shall hear some songs to-night, shall I not?’ asked Paul.

‘Oh yes! that is always your condition before you consent to do anything. If you save me half an hour’s cooking, I will sing to you for half an hour. Will that do?’

‘Yes,’ said Paul; and he followed Pen to the kitchen. Presently she ran back to the party on the bank.

‘Cecilia,’ she cried, ‘do you wish Paul to rummage for whatever he likes in your store-box? He says buns and butter and eggs will not do for tea, and he is looking for all sorts of things.’

‘He may take whatever he can find,’ said Cecilia. ‘I feel too idle to go and distribute things out of my box; so if you and Paul will take the trouble, it is but fair that you should have whatever you

like. Pray make us a splendid tea!' Kate read her book in peace for half an hour; Julian lay on his back looking at the sky and the trees; and Cecilia took a little parcel from her pocket, containing her embroidery, thimble, and cotton, and not a word passed until Paul approached.

'Ladies and gentleman,' he said, making a low bow, 'the banquet is ready.'

'Come, Kate,' cried Cecilia, rising, 'let us go to our banquet of tea and bread and butter. Oh, Paul,' she continued, as they entered the Lodge, 'you have indeed made a rummage!'

'What is the use of keeping things locked up that are meant to be eaten?'

'Splendid!' exclaimed Julian. 'Now, pray tell me, Ciss, why did you not give us this pot of marmalade at breakfast, and why did you not give us this potted meat at dinner?'

'Do you not understand that it was my providence? If you had caught no fish, there was the potted meat, on which we could have dined; and the marmalade was a reserve in case our butter ran short. As for those captain's biscuits, I had those to resort to if I had failed in baking cakes. What have you done to the biscuits, Paul?'

'That is called a devilled biscuit,' said Paul, with importance. 'Pen knew nothing about them, so I did them myself entirely. First I made them hot on the top of the stove, then I buttered them thickly; and when the butter had sunk in, I salted

and peppered them. You must eat them before they get cold, cousin Kate, with your eggs. And I begged Pen to boil two eggs each; so there is a good meal for once. The teapot stood on the corner of the stove-top, keeping hot whilst Pen boiled eggs. So I consider we have managed very well.'

'Extremely so,' replied Julian. 'First, I have two eggs and a devilled biscuit; then a bun spread over with potted meat; then another bun spread over with marmalade; and last, not least, what is that in the window-ledge?'

'Oh! that is a plum-cake to wind up with,' said Paul. 'That cunning Cecilia had all these things stowed away in her box there; and I really believe, if she had prepared tea, she would have given us nothing but buns and butter, and one egg a-piece.'

'You stingy Ciss,' cried Julian; 'we will always send Paul to hunt for good things in your store.'

'In that case,' replied Cecilia, 'you must not find fault with the constant bundles and baskets I shall have to bring. That cake, for instance, would have done nicely for to-morrow afternoon; but as it is quickly disappearing, I must bring something else. How shall we employ our time to-morrow afternoon?'

'We had better finish the garden fence, or at least go on with it; that is the chief thing we have to do now, and the garden in general.'

'As soon as you have cleared away the tea-things,' resumed Kate, 'we might spend an hour in marking out the flower-beds, and then we must try

as soon as possible to have it in nice order, and gay with flowers.' They had some discussion about the plan and shapes of the flower-beds; but Kate acting as arbiter, they ended by marking it out to the satisfaction of all parties. The little fence was to be covered with convolvulus and canariensis, and the beds were to be perfect nosegays. Creepers were to be planted all round the Lodge; but as they could not hope to see the progress of honeysuckle, clementis, and roses this year, canariensis was again to do duty by covering the walls at present. Inside, all was in tolerable order; the coloured window shed a pleasant light on the little room; the ceiling and walls, with their patterns of cones, were original and pretty. And though Paul declared that the pebble floor hurt his feet dreadfully, still it looked neat and ornamental.

'Oh!' cried Pen, 'we must have the garden finished and pretty before papa comes back. He will never believe that we have done all this ourselves. We will work hard to-morrow and astonish you, cousin Kate. Come now, had we not better go back? it will soon be too dark to do anything else.'

'What about the stove?' asked Kate. 'Do you think it will be worth while to have it altered?'

'Not if Paul has liberty to rout out Cecilia's stores,' said Julian, laughing. 'I do not feel inclined to drag it up to the house to-night at any rate. Let us leave it.' So they said good-bye to the island, and took their way home.

## CHAPTER X.

Cousin Kate leaves them—They go to the Island alone—The Accident—Cecilia's Presence of Mind—The Effect on Julian—A Happy Change—Conclusion.

As Kate had proposed, the usual lessons employed the next morning. Julian spent a good part of his time in copying the old farm gateway. His outline was very correct, and he began well. The sky looked almost as well as the copy, and the walls of the arch and farm-house did very fairly. Pen took extreme interest in this copy, and came continually round to look over Julian's work.

'Well, Pen, you look a great deal,' said Julian. 'Let me hear your remarks.'

'I like the sky, and I like the house,' said Pen; 'but you have not begun that tree well. It will never be so light and natural as the copy.'

'I do not expect it will,' replied Julian. 'Mama is an excellent colourist of trees; and as I am only beginning, what can be expected?' Pen made a sort of caper, and clapped her hands again.

'Come, Pen,' interposed Cecilia, 'help me to put away the books and maps. We will start immediately after luncheon, and we must each take tools

to-day, and work hard. How are you going to Ackham, Kate? will you ride?’

‘Yes, I think that will be my best way,’ she replied. ‘It is too far for a walk, and I cannot bear carriage-work alone. Will you run to the stable, Julian, and ask if I can have Tom-Tit, and Harrison to accompany me?’

After mounting Kate, and seeing her off, the four children set out for the island. Julian took the flag, and a long pole, to which it had once been attached on the occasion of a *fête* in the garden. The ladder, which he had used for mending the roof, was still on the island, and he purposed making use of it in his ascent of the tree. Cecilia had her own spade and rake, and a basket of fresh stores. Pen had also spade and rake; and Paul declared that he wanted nothing but his clasp-knife, as his work was to be cutting sticks for the fence. They arrived at the island without any mishap. The girls went to work at the flower-beds. Paul disappeared among the bushes. Julian seated himself with the flag-staff, and endeavoured to contrive a pulley for hoisting and lowering the banner, as Pen styled it. Presently he called to Paul to come and help in bringing the ladder to the mountain-ash tree.

‘Cannot you climb the tree without the ladder?’ asked Paul.

‘Of course I can,’ retorted Julian; ‘but when I am up as far as the boughs will bear me, I want to

put the ladder across from one branch to another, to stand upon, whilst I fix the flag-staff firmly on.'

'Then get up,' said Paul; 'I will hand you the ladder.'

The tree was rather slight for the purpose, but the only one of any height on the island. There was one tolerably perpendicular branch, to which Julian proposed to fasten his staff; but it was not stout enough to bear his weight on one side of it, without bending to a degree that would render it difficult for him to use hammer and nails. So he thought of laying the ladder across two boughs that sprang out almost horizontally a little below this upright stem. Then he thought he could stand upon the ladder and fix his staff at his ease. Having climbed up to this place, carrying in his hand a rope which was tied to the end of the ladder, he seated himself firmly across a branch, and steadily pulled up the ladder, Paul guiding it until it was beyond his reach. Julian found it difficult to lift it up and place it, so he lowered it again to Paul; and climbing a little higher, he put the rope round one of the upper boughs, so that he could draw it up, while sitting on his former perch, till it was quite above him. This answered better; and he contrived to rest it across two pretty stout branches, so that it formed a kind of scaffolding for him to stand upon. He had hung his hammer and nails with a ball of very strong twine round his neck; and now he called to Paul to climb up

after him, bringing in his hand the string that was tied to the end of the flag-staff; and he placed himself upon the ladder ready to receive it.

‘I do not exactly see how I am to hold it up against the tree whilst I nail it and tie it round,’ he said; ‘and you are not tall enough, Paul, even if you could reach it from that bough.’

‘Why,’ replied Paul, ‘knock in a good big nail where you mean the end of the staff to rest, and then support it on that whilst you rope it round.’

‘That is not a bad idea,’ answered Julian; ‘hold it, then, whilst I nail.’

Julian drove into the tree a large long nail as he sat on the ladder; and he thought that, by resting the end of the staff there, he could reach a good way up by standing on the ladder, so as to bind the tree and the staff together, besides aiding to make it firm with several nails. By degrees he drew up the long flag-staff till he had the end on his knee, whence he carefully transferred it to the large supporting nail; then putting the loop at the end of his ball of cord round the same nail, he began slowly and firmly to bind it round and round, Paul meantime sitting securely on his branch watching his brother’s operations. When Julian had reached as high as he could whilst standing on the ladder, he climbed up a little way in order to fasten the end of his cord firmly; and that done, he put his foot down to feel for the ladder. At first he stepped between the rungs, and in recover-



ing his foot to place it firmly, he gave the ladder a little push. He looked down, but it appeared all right and firm; so he trusted himself entirely upon it, and the end which had been almost pushed off the bough slipped quite off with the additional weight, and Julian, with the ladder, fell crashing through the boughs to the ground. Pen was at the moment looking at the tree, and admiring the floating flag. On seeing her brother fall heavily to the ground, she ran toward him screaming.

‘Cecilia, come, come! Julian is killed!’ Cecilia ran, and the two frightened girls bent over the senseless boy, quite powerless with terror and dismay. Paul descended the tree, he scarcely knew how, and joined his sisters, as completely useless as themselves.

‘Oh, what shall we do? what shall we do?’ cried Pen. ‘I am sure he is dead.’ Cecilia made a great effort to collect herself. She gently lifted his head on her knee.

‘I do not see any cut or wound on his head,’ she said; ‘he may be only stunned. Fetch some water, Paul—quick!—to throw in his face.’ Paul ran. ‘Feel his arms and legs if you can find any hurt anywhere,’ continued Cecilia to Pen. And Pen unfastened his neck-tie, unbuttoned his waistcoat, and then gently felt his arms. No motion was yet made. One leg was a little bent underneath the other; and as Pen tried to lay it straight, a slight groan came from his lips.

‘Thank God, he is not dead!’ said Cecilia, her tears beginning to fall. ‘Quick, Paul, with the water;’ and she sprinkled his face and chest. It could not surely do harm to give him a little wine,’ said Cecilia; ‘it might revive him. Run, Paul, and find a bottle in the store. Knock the neck off if you cannot find a corkscrew. When this was brought, Cecilia cautiously put a few drops into his mouth. She heard him swallow it, and ventured a little more; and then she had the intense pleasure of seeing him open his eyes, and stare confusedly at her and at Pen, whose faces were close to him. Cecilia tried to keep herself composed and steady.

‘You had better not speak,’ she said. ‘You fell out of the tree, and we do not know how much you are hurt yet. Lie quiet for a little longer.’ Julian shut his eyes again, and looked very pale. Cecilia sprinkled his face again, and wet his lips with the wine, and presently he looked at her again with a quieter gaze.

‘Where are you hurt, dear Julian?’ asked Cecilia. ‘Just whisper.’

‘Don’t know,’ he uttered faintly.

‘Try, Pen,’ said Cecilia, ‘to put his feet straight together. It must be very uncomfortable to have them twisted like that.’ Pen took his foot in both hands and moved it from under the other, when such a groan burst from the poor boy, that Cecilia’s heart sank. All alone on the island, far from

home, and no one likely to come to look for them till after Kate should return home.

‘My leg! my leg! it is broken, I am sure,’ whispered Julian. ‘Do try to get me home.’

‘What can we do?’ again cried Pen hopelessly. ‘Shall Paul and I take the boat, and go home as fast as we can for somebody to come and help us?’

‘No,’ said Cecilia quietly, ‘it would not do to leave Julian lying here so long; and after all, he would have to be taken in the boat. We must try to lift him in, moving his leg as little as possible.’

‘Oh, we shall never manage,’ again cried Pen.

Cecilia signed to her not to speak so loud, and shook her head towards Julian, hoping to make her sister understand that she must not frighten him.

‘We shall manage extremely well,’ she said. ‘Does not the rowing bench nearest the stern unhook, Paul?’

‘Yes, they both unhook,’ he replied.

‘Well, then, take away the one nearest the stern. You and Pen must manage both to sit on one bench, for it will leave room for Julian to lie in the bottom of the boat. Think, Pen, is there anything that we can put underneath him to be softer than the boards?’

‘I can think of nothing,’ Pen replied, ‘but the two or three towels you brought to-day.’

‘Grass,’ said Paul; ‘if we could get enough.’

‘Run and gather some handfuls; it will be better than nothing.’

When they were gone, Cecilia considered how they could best lift him into the boat. She could lift his head perhaps herself, by taking hold of him under his shoulders; but then the injured leg would be left to Paul or Pen, and it was evidently so agonizing for him to have it touched, that she felt sure he could not bear it to be lifted in their hands. If they could have reached the unlucky flag, to have laid him in it, lifting it by the corners; but it was useless to think of that. At last an expedient struck her. Paul and Pen came back with her frock full of grass.

‘Will this do, Cecilia, do you think?’

‘It will be a little protection from the boards,’ she replied. ‘Spread it on the bottom of the boat, and over it lay the towels; then run back.’ Pen soon returned.

‘Now,’ said Cecilia, ‘take off your frock skirt, and I will take off mine. We can lay him in them as they are so wide, and lift him much more easily that way.’ The two girls wore coloured cotton skirts, with holland Garibaldis, so their skirts were easily taken off. They laid them together flat on the ground beside Julian.

‘I can spare a petticoat too,’ suggested Pen; ‘so might you, Cecilia. We can go up well enough in our white petticoats this warm day; and if I spread the other two in the boat, it will be better.’ No sooner said than done; and when Pen returned breathless, Cecilia said to Julian—

‘We are going to lift you now upon those frocks, and I am afraid we shall hurt you a little; but we will do it as gently as we can. So you must be brave, dear Julian, and bear it as well as you are able. Do you, Paul, put your hands under his shoulders, and lift him very gently. You, Pen, lift the leg that is not hurt, and I will take this.’

One moment sufficed to lift him on the frocks. Poor Julian tried not to cry out; but, carefully as Cecilia touched the broken limb, the pain was excessive.

‘Now,’ said Cecilia, ‘I believe you are the strongest of us, Paul. You shall lift his head again. Bring the skirt together over his chest, and twist it so that you can hold firm by both hands. We will lift up each side of the skirts at the same time, so that the leg will not be touched. We shall go a few steps only at a time.’ Paul and Pen lifted steadily, just as Cecilia directed.

‘Now, put him down as gently as possible,’ she said, after a yard or two. ‘Tell me, Julian, are we hurting you very much?’

‘My leg is in great pain,’ he said. ‘I know you cannot move me any better; pray, go on.’ And they lifted again carefully and gently, and so by degrees passed the small space that intervened between the tree and the landing-place. Here they rested again and readjusted the skirts, so as to hold him very firmly in getting across the boat’s side.

‘I am not sure which had better go first. I

think, Pen, you had better join Paul in lifting his head over the boat side, and I shall be able to manage his feet by myself. You must step backwards. Pray, be slow and careful.' The two foremost got over successfully, but Cecilia had to step into the water before she could venture to lift the legs in. Poor Julian, in spite of all their care, got a jerk or two, and could not avoid an exclamation of anguish as they laid him down, quite exhausted with their efforts, in the bottom of the boat.

'I must have something else to raise his head a little,' cried Cecilia. 'Your jacket, Paul; quick!' This was folded, and placed under his head.

'Will you run back for the bottle of wine that I left on the ground, Pen, and then, Paul, row as fast as you can; don't spare yourself.' Pen soon returned, and squeezing herself in beside Paul, they managed to row together—their anxiety to reach home making them regardless of all inconveniences. The time that it took to cross the lake seemed interminable to Cecilia; and doubtless it was more so to Julian, but he forbore to make any complaint. Cecilia put the least drop of wine in his mouth from time to time, sprinkled his face with water, and comforted him as well as she could. At last they reached the boat-house.

'Now, poor Julian, you will have a long wait, I fear. Run up, Paul. First go in and find Soames and John. Tell them to bring down the little settee or sofa without a back, that is beneath the

drawing-room window, and a pillow or two. Send them off immediately, and then go to the stable and send Jones to Denton for Dr Benham. Let him saddle the first horse that he can get, and go without a moment's delay. He must tell Dr Benham that there has been a bad accident, and run back yourself with them, Paul.' The boy was half-way across the park in a few moments.

'Can we do nothing about moving him out of the boat?' asked Pen, who could not patiently bear the waiting and expecting.

'Indeed we cannot,' replied Cecilia. 'We should only hurt him, and he lies here just as well as on the grass. There is nothing for it, Pen, but to be patient. See how patient he is. I regret, though, that I did not send a message for Kate to be fetched home. Very likely she will not come till late, and I shall have to see Dr Benham by myself.'

'Never mind, Ciss,' said Julian. 'You have got me here famously.'

'There, don't talk,' she replied. 'Here is some one coming already. Can you see who it is, Pen?'

'Yes; I think it is the servants with the sofa, and Mrs Bakewell also carrying something. I don't see Paul. Oh, I wish they would make haste!'

'So do I,' said Julian. 'This boat, or whatever I am lying on, is beginning to feel most dreadfully hard, and my leg does hurt so; I feel as if I could not bear it much longer.'

‘In a few minutes they will be here,’ said Cecilia. ‘Have courage a little longer. Now I see Paul running down.’

‘Oh, Mrs Bakewell, I am so glad you came too! Put one pillow for his head, and one at the other end for the hurt leg.’

‘What have you been about, children?’ said the old woman, panting. ‘Is he very badly hurt? What will my master say? And Miss Kate out too!’

‘Never mind talking about it now, dear Mrs Bakewell,’ said Cecilia gently. ‘Let us get him home and into bed. You had better lift him up by the skirts he is lying on,—you and John at each side of his head, and Pen and I at his feet.’

‘I think, Miss,’ said the old butler, ‘that we can take him steadier and better without you. It is a long step for you from the boat to the landing, with a weight to lift.’

‘Well, you are perhaps right. Stir his leg as little as possible.’

The two men lifted Julian with much less shaking than his sisters and brother had done, and he was placed on the sofa, and gently carried up to the house; the girls and the housekeeper following closely.

‘Well, I declare,’ said the old woman, ‘you were driven to take off your frocks to lift him in! I never saw such contrivances; you will catch cold, to a certainty; and Master Paul without any jacket!’

‘It is in the boat, and so are our petticoats,’ said



Pen; 'but we cannot go back now for them: never mind the boat till to-morrow; did you fasten it, Paul?'

'John did,' replied Paul; 'it is all right.'

'Now, consider a little, Mrs Bakewell,' said Cecilia, 'what we had better do when we reach the house. I suppose the doctor cannot be here for a good hour; and during that time can we do nothing to relieve the pain of the broken leg?'

'I never have seen such a thing in my life,' said Mrs Bakewell. 'I could not venture to advise anything.' Cecilia saw that she could only rely on her own judgment; so, as soon as they reached the hall door, she desired the two servants to carry him upstairs, holding the sofa perfectly horizontal; and she sent Pen up to turn off the upper clothing of his bed, that they might at once lay him on it. This was done by lifting him off the sofa by the help of the frock skirts, which still were beneath him; and then Cecilia proceeded to cut off the leg of his trousers just above the knee; and then finding that pulling off his boot and sock was impossible without giving him much pain, she determined to cut them off also, which she did by gently inserting the scissors and cutting down the boot at each side. Mrs Bakewell witnessed these proceedings with some vexation.

'I am certain, Miss Cecilia,' she said, 'that there was no necessity for spoiling those good clothes. Master Julian could have laid as he was until the doctor came.'

‘His leg will feel much easier from having no confinement of any sort,’ said Cecilia; ‘and I am sure mama will not value a pair of trousers and boots in comparison.’

‘You have done quite right, Ciss,’ said Julian; ‘no one could have managed better. I feel very giddy and faintish; give me a little wine.’

‘I am almost afraid of doing wrong,’ replied Cecilia. ‘I have already given you a good deal. Try to do without till the doctor comes, and smell this hartshorn instead. I will wet your forehead with eau-de-cologne, and blow upon it.’ With various little wiles to pass away the time, Ciss listened anxiously for the sound of the horse’s feet; and Pen went in and out, looked from the window, and fidgeted so much, that Cecilia could not help begging her to go down and stand at the hall door till the doctor arrived. At last the welcome sound of a horse trotting was heard, and the long wished-for Dr Benham made his appearance, preceded by Pen.

‘So you have taken advantage of your liberty, in Mr Latimer’s absence, to climb about and break your leg,’ he said; and glancing round to see who was in the room, he sent Pen to fetch the butler.

‘He will be more useful to me,’ he continued, addressing Cecilia, ‘than you or Mrs Bakewell, who I know is a very nervous personage.’ His examination was soon made, and he told Julian that

it was a simple fracture, and would quickly and easily be set; but that he should want some one to hold him firmly. And he sent the housekeeper out of the room.

‘May I not stay?’ said Cecilia; ‘I think I might be useful to Julian, and I shall not disturb you in the least.’

‘Is not your cousin, Miss Percy, with you?’ asked Dr Benham.

‘She is with us,’ replied Cecilia; ‘but, most unfortunately, to-day she has been away. However, I expect she will soon return now.’

‘You need not fear Cecilia,’ said Julian; ‘she managed to get me up here, from the island in the lake, famously; and I should like her to stay.’ So Cecilia sat by his head, and held his hand whilst the leg was set. She felt much frightened, and did not once take her eyes from Julian’s face to look at what Dr Benham and Soames were doing. Julian bore it very well, and Cecilia was surprised when Dr Benham said—

‘There, that is done; I shall not give you any more pain now. You have only to keep as quiet as possible, and in a week or two you will be as able to climb trees as ever you were.’ Then he helped to take off Julian’s jacket and clothes without shaking him; and having put on his night-dress and covered him lightly, he was shaking his hand and saying adieu, when Kate entered looking white and terrified.

'My dear Julian,' she said, 'what is all this?—the only day I have left you at all.'

'You need not be in the least alarmed, Miss Percy,' said Dr Benham; 'he has escaped very well with a little shake, which he will soon get over, and a broken leg, which is already set; and if he will obey orders and remain very quiet, he will soon be himself again. Luckily he was brought home without shaking or injuring the broken bone. I scarcely know how these children managed it, for I understand there was no one with them. We will now leave him perfectly quiet, if you please.' Mrs Bakewell was stationed by his side, with orders not to let him talk; and Kate and Cecilia went down with Dr Benham. He was in a hurry; and taking leave of them with a promise to come early the next day, he rode away, and the girls entered the drawing-room.

'Oh, Kate!' exclaimed Cecilia, 'I have been so dreadfully frightened.' And the necessity for self-control being at an end, poor Cecilia threw herself on the sofa, and burst into tears.

'I am sure you have, dear Ciss,' said Kate. 'Tell me all about it. He fell out of a tree?'

'Mrs Bakewell won't let me go into Julian's room,' cried Pen, entering, 'so I shall come to you. How unlucky it was, cousin Kate, that you were away to-day! But I don't know whether you could have prevented the accident. Both the boys have been up in trees hundreds of times before, and I too,

with no accident. You would not have forbid his climbing the tree, would you, cousin Kate ?'

'It was the ladder,' said Cecilia, 'that caused his fall. I dare say Kate would have forbidden that.'

'How did the ladder cause him to fall out of the tree?' asked Kate. 'I do not understand.'

'Why,' exclaimed Pen, 'he took the ladder up into the tree to stand upon. We were not watching him particularly, so I don't know how he managed it. Where is Paul?' And she ran to the door and called for him. Paul was loitering about the hall, and came in.

'Pray explain this to me, Paul,' said Kate. 'What was Julian doing, that he had this bad fall? He is so accustomed to climbing, that I am surprised.'

'He laid the ladder across two boughs, and stood upon it. One end of the ladder slipped off, so down they went together.'

'Well, it is of no use now to blame his carelessness. We must do our best to get him well. But I want to know how you managed to bring him home.'

'You will never guess,' said Pen, laughing, 'how we lifted him (that was Cecilia's plan) in our frocks; and our other petticoats were laid in the boat, on the top of some grass, and we came home in our white petticoats.'

'He could scarcely bear to be touched,' said Cecilia, 'and I was so afraid of doing mischief; yet I knew that he ought to be brought home at once

And really he was very good; he let me do just what I liked, and never said one cross word. I was quite surprised, for I felt in such despair at first, because you were not there, and I thought he would object to everything I might propose.'

'Do you know the reason he did not, Cecilia?' said Pen. 'I think it was because you ordered us to do this and that, and seemed to have made up your mind quite, and did not say, May we do so, Julian? I think that made him trust himself to you so willingly. Oh, you would have been astonished, Kate. I was so frightened, I did not know what to say or do at all; and Cecilia was quite composed, and said at once what was to be done, and sent me and Paul to prepare the boat, and kept Julian quiet. You could not have done better yourself, cousin Kate.'

'There was such great necessity for some one to take the lead,' said Cecilia, apologetically. 'If I had not, what would have become of poor Julian?'

'My dear Ciss,' replied Kate, laughing, 'do not make excuses for having done well. I am heartily glad I was not there, for then you would have left all to me; and now you have tried your own powers, and not only see that you are equal to such an emergency, but that when you do behave like a sensible girl, Julian shows no disposition to worry you, or to decry your capacity. For your sake, I am not sorry this has happened. And you, Pen,

you quite lost yourself—you who are generally so ready and so fearless.’

‘I confess that I did, cousin Kate. I had not the slightest idea what to do when I saw Julian lying there, and was too glad to obey Cecilia mechanically; so was Paul.’

‘Now I will go and stay with Julian a little while,’ said Kate; but as she was leaving the room, a message came from Mrs Bakewell, saying that Julian was so soundly asleep, that she thought he ought to be left undisturbed by any one. So Kate went to dinner with the others, and afterwards she stayed for an hour with Julian, and arranged that the housekeeper should sleep in his room, sending Paul to sleep in another. Then Cecilia was to come and take charge first thing in the morning. Kate and Pen came very early to his room, to learn how he was going on; and finding that he had slept pretty well, and did not suffer much pain, they went down to their music, leaving Cecilia with him.

‘Let us make some arrangement,’ said Kate, when they were at breakfast, ‘so that Julian shall always have some one with him, and yet that we do not lose all our regular work and lessons. Would it not do for Pen to stay up-stairs one hour after breakfast, when you, Cecilia, can read with me? Then you shall have charge of him for the rest of the morning, and in the afternoon I will take my turn.’

‘And the poor island,’ said Pen, ‘is to be quite

abandoned, I suppose, with its flag fluttering about in solitary grandeur.'

'Oh Pen!' cried Paul, 'that reminds me that your petticoats and my jacket are left in the boat, and it was not put into the boat-house last night. Did it rain?'

'No, luckily it was a fine night,' replied Kate. 'You shall be deputed to go and bring up the things, Paul. As for putting the boat in the boat-house, it is scarcely worth while, as we might take a little row some time to-day. Now, Pen, run up to Julian;' and she went herself with Cecilia to the schoolroom. They were, however, interrupted in about half an hour by the arrival of Dr Benham, and Kate went up with him. The report was satisfactory, all progressing quite rightly; so Cecilia took up with her a parcel of books, some drawings, and other things, that she thought might amuse Julian, and the two hours before luncheon passed pleasantly enough. Afterwards Kate came, and sat down by him with her work.

'Cecilia has been reading to you this morning,' she said; 'so we will talk a little now, if you feel inclined.'

'Yes,' said Julian; 'I wanted to tell you how well Cecilia managed yesterday, and how thoughtful and nice she was. I was quite astonished, for I had no idea that she ever had her wits at command; and she has been reading to me this morning a nice account of Pompeii and Herculaneum,



and she had pictures of all the things described in some numbers of illustrations of the Museum at Portici, and she amused me very much. I begin to think you were right about Cecilia, and that I have driven away from me a good companion.'

'I am delighted to hear you say so,' replied Kate; 'you will have a good opportunity of experiencing her kindness and attention during the time that you will be shut up here, for I fear you will not be out again for perhaps a fortnight.'

'That is a terribly long time,' said Julian, sighing; 'but I must get through it as well as I can. I think I can manage to write, and I will write to mama to-night, and tell her all about this stupid accident, and how they brought me home in their frocks, and how well I am watched and taken care of among you all.'

'You can write a little,' said Kate; 'but you are not to use any exertion, and I must not let you retard your recovery. I will write to my aunt; and if you send a small note in my letter, just to show her that you are not too bad to write, it will be better than your writing much.'

'Very well,' said Julian resignedly; 'I suppose I must just do what I am told.'

'You cannot help yourself, poor boy,' replied Kate, laughing; 'so it is very well to make a great merit of it.' Julian had, since his bathing lessons began, taken much interest in the garden; so

Pen, having discovered this, made a point of carrying into his room out of the greenhouse any plant that had newly flowered; and taking it back the following morning, she brought another, besides a good bouquet each day from the open flower-garden. So he had by his bedside a little table, with a flower-pot containing some beautiful exotic, and a glass with a bunch of fresh sweet flowers. This table was Pen's especial care; and as she would not let any one meddle with it, Cecilia was obliged to supply another table with her books and pictures. They went through the Pompeii book and the illustrations; then Cecilia brought one or two of the Arctic voyages in search of Sir J. Franklin, and she contrived to find pictures of all the animal and vegetable productions mentioned in them, views of the desolate coast, of the ships covered in for winter, and so on. Kate herself left him as much as possible to the care of the two girls, thinking it an excellent opportunity for him to observe that they were affectionate and solicitous to lighten the dulness of a tedious confinement; and not only this, but that Cecilia was really well informed, had made great use of her mother's nice collection of books, and was never at a loss for some amusing and interesting work. She and Julian were busy one morning with Livingstone's book on Central Africa. Cecilia was reading it, and Julian had a map before him, and a variety of prints, old and modern, on the bed, all referring to Africa

in some way, when Dr Benham came in for his daily inspection.

‘I am sorry to disturb you, young people,’ he said; ‘but I must turn off all these papers and amusing things; and I must move Pen’s flowers out of the way. You are in great good luck, my boy,’ he continued, ‘to have these sisters paying such attention to you. I attended a poor fellow with a broken leg not long since, who had not a single soul to speak to him from morning to night, only the scanty attendance of an indifferent nurse. What would he have given for a sister?’

‘Oh,’ said Julian, ‘I am beginning to think that sisters are very nice things; much better than brothers.’

‘All good in their way,’ replied the doctor. ‘I suppose Paul is not so handy in a sick-room.’

‘He scarcely ever comes into it,’ said Julian, ‘while Pen brings me all sorts of things. For instance, there is a most lovely geranium, which I have never seen before; that is a new sort of beetle-trap, which she and Harrison have contrived between them; and look in that small basket.’ Dr Benham peeped in.

‘Oh, it is a nasty worm; I am not fond of such things,’ he said.

‘Pen would not let you call it a nasty worm,’ said Julian, laughing; ‘she calls it a beautiful slow-worm. She found it this morning near the lake. Then Cecilia amuses me half the day, and

surprises me by knowing so much about all kinds of things.'

'She has proved herself a first-rate nurse,' said Dr Benham; 'and I have the pleasure of telling her that I think you may sit up in bed now for a short time every day; only you must be lifted up very gently, of course not stirring your leg.'

'Oh, I am so glad!' said Cecilia; 'he may then do a little drawing. I can manage a small table across the bed.'

'It will be a little rest, after lying down so long,' said Dr Benham; 'and in a few more days I hope to have him up.' So that afternoon Kate and Cecilia managed to put a table quite across the bed, so that it was directly in front of him; and having brought up his drawings, his copy, and materials, he worked at the picture for half an hour very happily.

'After all,' he said, 'I have managed the willow better than I expected. I must make Pen acknowledge that it is not so very far behind the copy. Do you think it is, Ciss?'

'I must tell you the reason that Pen was so much amused at your taking this for a copy,' said Cecilia, colouring. 'I dared not tell you then, but I can now, because you are so much kinder to me. It is not mama's drawing; it is one of mine; and Pen thought you would not have condescended to copy it, had you known.'

'Is it really your own doing, Ciss,' said Julian, 'without a bit of help from any one?'

‘Yes ; I copied it from one that mama purchased, with several others, from a shop in London, and she said it was nicely done enough to be left in her portfolio with her own ; and indeed, Julian, I should have told you when you took it out, but I was afraid.’

‘Then you need not be afraid any more,’ said Julian bluntly. ‘Your drawings are so much better than mine, that I may very well copy them ; and, in fact, you know more than I do about most things.’ Cecilia, perceiving that this was really what Julian thought, soon took courage to talk more to him, and to be with him as cheerful and pleasant as she was with Kate.

‘I am going down now,’ she said one evening, ‘to sing to Paul. Do you know, we have made an agreement that next holidays I am to teach him music ? He really has a very good ear, and he ought to learn.’

‘I like to hear you sing too,’ said Julian ; ‘but of course you cannot bring the piano up here.’

‘But I can bring my guitar,’ replied Cecilia, ‘only you used to dislike it, and call it a silly strumming thing ; so perhaps you would rather not hear it.’

‘I was a stupid fellow,’ said Julian ; ‘I only said so because I could not play it myself. I should like to hear it very much.’ So Cecilia brought the guitar, and sang several little Spanish and Italian airs.

‘It is very nice,’ said Julian. ‘I think I should

like to learn music too. Will you teach me next holidays, as well as Paul?’

‘Indeed I will, with pleasure, if you think I am capable. What do you think, Kate?’ said she, as her cousin entered, ‘Julian asks if I will teach him music next holidays. Are you not surprised?’

‘I am pleased,’ said Kate, ‘but not surprised; because I was sure that Julian would have the sense to throw away his foolish contempt of his sisters. Now acknowledge, Julian, that you have found a very equal companion in Cecilia, and that you are happier since you have been friendly and sociable with her. I have left you much to her care, in order that you might discover this.’

‘I do not say that she is equal to me, cousin Kate,’ replied Julian; ‘for she is much better. She is cleverer, and better taught, and not so conceited; and I have not deserved all the care she has taken of me. As for Pen, Paul is not to be compared to her. I will never despise my sisters again, cousin Kate; and I thank you heartily for showing me my folly.’

‘I think I may go home,’ said Kate, laughing. ‘You will not want me any more to keep the peace.’

‘Not to keep the peace,’ said Cecilia, ‘but to help us to enjoy it. Papa comes next week, and then the holidays will soon end. Do you think Julian will be fit to return to school yet?’

‘Scarcely,’ replied Kate. ‘I dare say he must take another week at home. Paul will have to go

alone, and I really think Pen will miss and regret him. They have become great friends since you have been shut up here, Julian.'

'I dare say,' said Julian, 'that he would always have been pleasanter without my bad example. However, I won't let you dread the holidays again, poor Ciss. I mean, cousin Kate, to make them the happiest part of the year both to Pen and Cecilia, as they will be to me and to Paul.'

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